BUYING GUIDE TO HIGH-DEFINITION CAMCORDERS

www.macworld.com.au 06.2009

AUSTRALIAN

Macworld

TURN IT UP

THE SOUND AND VISION EDITION

June 2009
$6.95 inc GST
$NZ8.50 inc GST

9 771329 948021

INTUOS 4 | ROXIO TOAST 10 PRO | ELGATO 264 HD | SONY HDR-XR520VE
NIKON P90 | OLYMPUS MJU TOUGH 8000 AND MORE

Other World Computing
Serving the Mac Universe since 1988

www.macsales.com

Why buy from OWC?
We don't just sell it, we tell you how to install and use it.

Award-winning support... BizRate Circle of Excellence 5 straight years.

Extremely fast delivery at a reasonable cost.

Live Chat support... even on weekends.

Expert installation services with fast turnaround.

Free lifetime technical support.

Free online "Do-It-Yourself" videos for easy installation.
Check out our new page!
www.macsales.com/installvideos

Easiest Way to Dock and Access Hard Drives at Will
www.macsales.com/voyager

Data Access Now Made Simple!

NewerTech® Voyager™ SATA I/II hard drive docking solutions support all 2.5" and 3.5" hard drives up to 2.0TB!

Plug and Play, Hot Swap, and add a new drive at anytime. Offers flash memory card like ease of use, but with huge capacity gains.

Hard drive not included with Voyager. See below for hard drive bundles.

Voyager Q
FW800/400+ USB2.0+eSATA
only **$94.99**

Voyager S2
USB2.0+eSATA
only **$49.99**

Macitynet.it BEST OF EXPO MWSF 2009

"Remarkably Convenient" - Macworld

newertechnology

SPECIAL! NewerTech Voyager S2 + Hard Drive Bundle

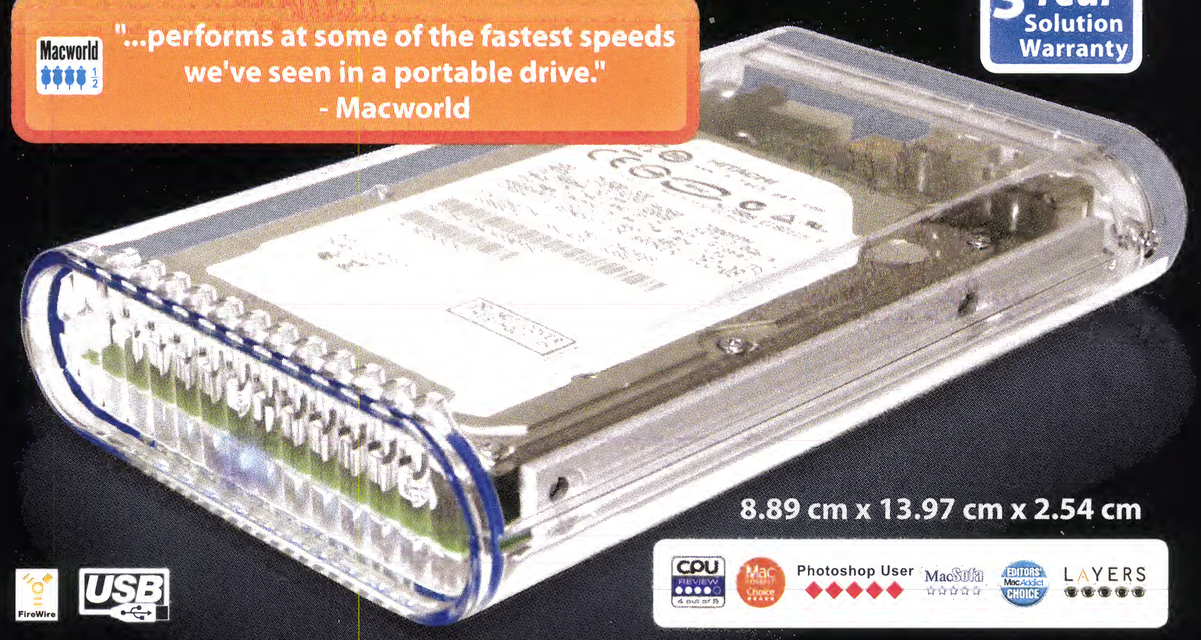
Size	Speed	USB 2.0+eSATA
500GB	7200RPM	$109.99
1.0TB	7200RPM	$139.99
1.5TB	7200RPM	$179.99

Bus Powered Solutions
www.macsales.com/firewire

Fast, Reliable, Bus-Powered Plug and Play

3 Year Solution Warranty

Macworld **"...performs at some of the fastest speeds we've seen in a portable drive." - Macworld**



8.89 cm x 13.97 cm x 2.54 cm

FireWire USB

CDU Mac Addict Photoshop User MacSofa Editors' Choice MacAddict LAYERS

OWC® Mercury On-The-Go Pro™ Portable Solutions
Compact and versatile — powers right away via FireWire® or USB 2.0 interface, no external power required!

Size	RPM Speed	Cache	USB 2.0 Only	FW400 +USB 2.0	FW800/400 +USB 2.0
320GB	5400	8MB	$89.99	$109.99	$129.99
500GB	5400	8MB	$127.99	$147.99	$167.99
320GB	7200	16MB	$104.99	$124.99	$147.99

MOST POPULAR

Available from 80GB to 500GB!

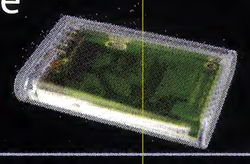
"These Drives Are A No-Brainer For An iMac Or Any Mac. Almost Noiseless, Ultra Low Power, And Top Performance—You Can't Lose." - Lloyd Chambers, DigLloyd

Software Included $200 Value

All OWC & NewerTech configured external drive solutions come ready to Plug and Play with all interface connection cables, include full versions of Intech® HD Speedtools™, NovaStor NovaBACKUP, Prosoft Data Backup 3, and Carbon Copy Cloner, and are Leopard® Time Machine™ ready.

intech PROSOFT TIME MACHINE READY

Build your own drive!
0GB 'Add your own hard drive' kits available from **$27.95**



To see a full selection of kits, visit: www.macsales.com/storage

Drive Type	Interfaces	Price
SATA	USB 2.0	$27.95
ATA/IDE	FW800+USB 2.0	$67.99

At OWC Our Customers Come 1st!
QUALITY PRODUCTS **COMPETITIVE PRICES** **EXPERT SUPPORT**

Our site is tested and certified daily to prevent hackers from accessing your confidential data. McAfee SECURE

Visit: **www.macsales.com** *Call:* **815.338.8685**

Orders ship from USA with extremely competitive shipping rates.
All prices quoted in US dollars.

Customer Quote CORNER

"We ordered your drive and our daughter got it in England in 2 days. Very reasonable shipping price and outstanding service!"

- John D.

More Memory = Faster Mac

www.macsales.com/memory

Apple® Mac® Pro XEON™ - Max Any Model Up To 32GB!*

Get the right memory for any 2006/2007/2008 model

SAVINGS up to 74% vs factory!

*Up to 8GB for March 2009 Quad-Core Model

As low as **$22.19** per GB

4GB Kit (2GB Modules x 2) from **$89.99**

32GB Kit (4GB Modules x 8) from **$779.00**

Upgrade:

- 667MHz & 800MHz
- 2.0GHz, 2.66GHz, 2.8GHz, 3.0GHz, and 3.2GHz Quad-Core, Quad Core x 2 (8-Core) *all models*

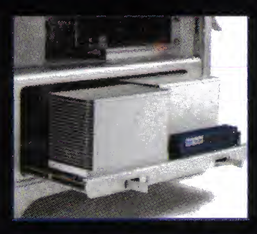
NEW! Memory for March 2009 Quad-Core & 8-Core models

8GB Matched Set (2GB Modules x 4) **$142.99**

16GB Matched Set (2GB Modules x 8) **$279.99**

32GB Matched Set (4GB Modules x 8) from **$1649.99**

Also available: 6GB, 12GB, & 24GB Kits



Upgrade:

- 1066MHz
- Quad-Core 2.66GHz/2.93GHz; 8-Core 2.26GHz/2.66GHz/2.93GHz

Memory for iMac®, MacBook®, MacBook Pro, Mac mini (Intel)

2.0GB from **$26.99**

4.0GB Kits from **$53.99**

6.0GB Kits from **$185.99**

NEW! March 2009 Models' Memory

NEW! 8.0GB Kits
(for 2009 'Unibody' 17-inch and 15-inch 2.66/2.93GHz Only)
$679.99

Up to 8.0GB!

We Have The Right Memory For Your Mac

From 68020 to PPC to Intel®, from Classic to Pro — OWC has the right memory for all the latest Macs and nearly every Mac!

Find what you need to max your Mac's performance in 3 easy clicks with our on-line memory configurator!
www.macsales.com/MyOWC

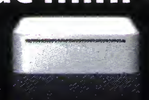
Power Mac® G5

As low as **$14.00** per GB

iMac G5

As low as **$14.99** per GB

Mac mini G4



As low as **$39.95** per GB

PowerBook® G4

As low as **$15.99** per GB

"That's a great deal!" - Dave Hamilton, Mac Observer

All OWC memory meets or exceeds manufacturer specifications for maximum quality assurance, but at the independent prices you can afford. Plus, you receive the industry-leading Lifetime Advance Replacement Warranty and award-winning US-based customer support.

Your Online Mac Upgrade Center: Internal Hard Drives

www.macsales.com/harddrive

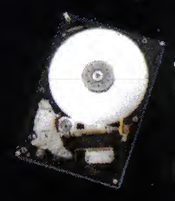
HITACHI PARTNER PROGRAM — Seagate Premier Partner

Laptop Drives Hitachi®, Seagate®, Toshiba®, Western Digital®
2.5" Serial ATA, IDE/ATA from 80GB to 500GB

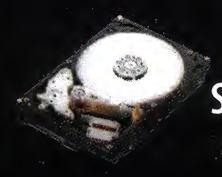
500GB 5400RPM Hitachi 9.5mm now **$97.99**

500GB 7200RPM Seagate 9.5mm now **$159.99**

Desktop Drives Hitachi, Seagate, Western Digital
3.5" Serial ATA, IDE/ATA from 80GB to **2.0TB**



1.0TB Hitachi 7K1000.B 3.5" SATA II now **$89.99**



1.0TB Hitachi E7K1000 3.5" SATA II Enterprise now **$149.99**

1.5TB Western Digital 'Green Power' 3.5" SATA II now **$159.99**

DISCOVER NETWORK · AMERICAN EXPRESS · MasterCard · VISA · JCB · PayPal

Learn more about OWC's new **'Green'** headquarters.

Conservation & Recycling for a greener tomorrow
http://www.macsales.com/LEED/
COMPUTERWORLD'S Top 12 GREEN-IT COMPANIES

NewerTech and NewerTech arrow logo are registered trademarks and Voyager and the Newer Technology, Inc. logo are trademarks of Newer Technology, Inc. OWC and OWC logo are registered trademarks and Mercury On-The-Go Pro and Other World Computing are trademarks of Other World Computing. Other marks may be the trademark or registered trademark property of their owners. Prices, specifications, and availability are subject to change without notice.

Macbook Air - Run-Outs!

Designwyse has the last remaining stock of previous model Macbook Airs. These top of the line models are all fitted with 64GB Solid State Drives. At half the original price, these brand new, beautiful machines will Run-Out quickly!

MacBook Air 13" 2GB Ram with 64GB Solid State Drive

Macbook Air 2GB Ram, 1.8Ghz, 64GB Solid State Drive, full 1 yr warranty.

WAS $3,999# SAVE $2,004

Now only $1,995

Discount AppleCare 3yr Wty - Add $295 (was $419)

SSD

Standard Solid State

The MacBook Air is Ultra thin, Ultra light and Ultra slick. It's absolutely the coolest, most convenient laptop available.

Its inbuilt 64GB SSD solid-state drive has no moving parts and delivers superior speed, performance and reliability.

With 64GB Solid State Drive

Ultra thin - Ultra slick

- ✓ 1.8GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
- ✓ Ultra light and easy to carry
- ✓ Advanced Multi-Touch trackpad
- ✓ Precision aluminium unibody
- ✓ Add AppleCare at 30% off

Even Less With a Trade-In!

Runout Offer - Extra Options

All prices Inc Gst

Apple 20" Cinema Display $795
Samsung 24" LCD Display - 3yr Wty (1920 x 1200) $595
Apple Macbook Air External Superdrive - bus powered $135
Griffin Elevator Laptop Stand $75
STM Glove (Neoprene) for 13" Macbook Air $45
STM Slip Carry Bag for 13" Macbook Air $69
Creative T40 2.0 Speaker System $95
13" AppleCare Ext 3yr Wty (Normally $419).....$295

New Macbook Air - Models and Prices

Inc Gst

MacBook Air 1.6GHz, Intel Core Duo, 2GB Ram, 120GB SATA HD, NIVDIA $2899
MacBook Air 1.86GHz, Intel Core Duo, 2GB Ram, 128GB SSD,, NIVDIA $3999

Authorised Reseller

Visa - No Surcharge MC - No Surcharge Amex - Add 2% Diners - Add 2%

All prices include Gst. # Based on Apple's previous webstore price. Prices subject to change without notice. E&OE. Available only while stocks last. Payment by Cash, Credit Card, Bank Transfer, Flexirent, or Finance. Full 1 yr Guarantee can be extended to 3 years with AppleCare Extended Warranty at prices shown above. $25 Delivery Australia Wide. $15 Melb Metro.

Ph (03) 9554 6000 FreeCall **1800 334 684**

1 Fairborne Way Keysborough VIC sales@designwyse.com.au www.designwyse.com.au

Designwyse
Professional Computer Solutions

In Business?

Act now for an EXTRA 30% Tax Deduction on Mac/Xerox Bundles from Designwyse.

Eligible businesses must have purchased prior to June 30th 2009 to claim the extra tax deduction in this financial year. Please see website for details.

$94/week#

Mac Pro Studio Bundle inc Xerox A3/A4 Colour Laser Printer

High powered 8 Core MacPro workstation and crisp hi-res Apple Cinema display plus Fuji Xerox professional A3/A4 colour Laser printer.

- Mac Pro 2.26GHz Two Quad Xeon/ 6GB RAM/ 640GB Hard Disk/ SuperDrive/ Bluetooth.
- Apple 24" LED Cinema Display (1920 x 1600)
- AppleCare - Onsite Extended 3 year Warranty
- Fuji Xerox C4350 A3/A4 Colour Laser Printer

Mac Pro + 24" Display **Xerox 4350 A3 Colour Laser** **RRP $15,720, Save $3,125**

Mac Pro Bundle FUJI xerox **$12,595 or $94/week#**

$38/week#

20" iMac Studio Bundle inc Xerox A4 Colour Laser Printer

All in one Apple iMac Core 2 Duo workstation plus a Fuji Xerox C3210 A4 colour Laser printer.

- iMac 20" 2.66GHz/ 2GB/ 320GB/ SuperDrive
- Inc Extra Ram upgrade - Total of 4GB RAM
- AppleCare - Onsite Extended 3 year Warranty
- Fuji Xerox C3210DX A4 Colour Laser Printer

20" IMac **Xerox 3210 A4 Colour Laser** **RRP $4,097, Save $902**

Imac Bundle FUJI xerox **$3,195 or $38/week#**

All prices include GST. Price subject to change without notice. E&OE. # Weekly rates based on a 3 year (CHP) Corporate Hire Purchase plan with a 6% residual to approved business applicants. PLEASE NOTE: * We advise checking with your accountant regarding your eligibility for the extra 30% Tax deduction announced by the government. Please see our website for further details.

Authorised Reseller

Ph (03) 9554 6000 FreeCall 1800 334 684

1 Fairborne Way Keysborough VIC sales@designwyse.com.au www.designwyse.com.au

Designwyse
Professional Computer Solutions

Streetwise.com.au

STREETWISE SOFTWARE P/L

Authorised Solutions Reseller

Latest Macs | Mac Memory | iPods & Accessories | Free Training | Great Prices

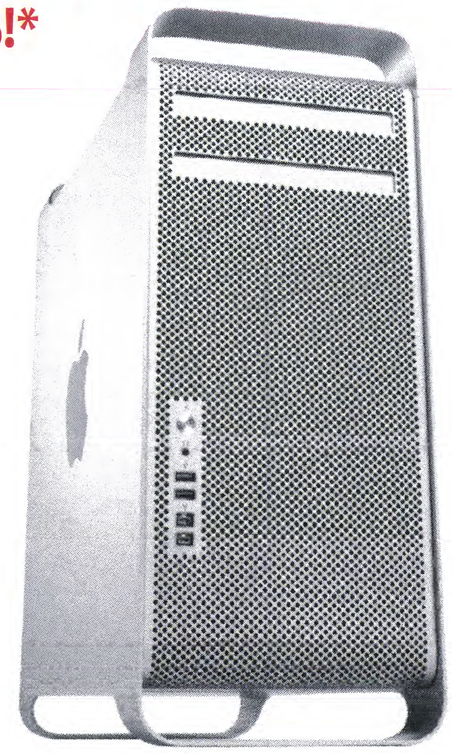
Australia-Wide Delivery!

Is your business eligible for the additional 30% tax deduction?

The Government's additional 30% tax deduction on capital purchases ends June 30!

Don't miss out, buy now to get the full 30%!*

iMac 20" 2.66GHz	FLEXIRENT. $23.08 per week^	RRP ~~$1999~~ $1949
iMac 24" 2.66GHz	FLEXIRENT. $28.38 per week^	RRP ~~$2499~~ $2449
iMac 24" 2.93GHz	FLEXIRENT. $33.92 per week^	RRP ~~$2999~~ $2939
iMac 24" 3.06GHz	FLEXIRENT. $41.54 per week^	RRP ~~$3699~~ $3629



Mac Pro 2.66GHz Quad-core	FLEXIRENT. $49.38 per week^	RRP ~~$4499~~ $4399
Mac Pro Dual 2.26GHz Quad-core	FLEXIRENT. $59.77 per week^	RRP ~~$5899~~ $5779

Mac mini 2.0GHz - 120GB	FLEXIRENT. $12.23 per week^	RRP ~~$1049~~ $1019
Mac mini 2.0GHz - 320GB	FLEXIRENT. $16.15 per week^	RRP ~~$1399~~ $1359

NO CREDIT CARD SURCHARGE!

MacBook Air 1.6GHz	FLEXIRENT. $32.77 per week^	RRP ~~$2899~~ $2849

*Consult your tax adviser about your eligibility.

FLEXIRENT®

Flexirent equipment valued at $1499 or more and receive your choice of a BONUS Elagto EyeTV DTT HD Digital TV Tuner + Bose Companion 2 Series II Speakers OR Samsung CLP-315 colour laser printer#.

Bose Companion 2 Series II Speakers
Elagto EyeTV DTT

OR

Samsung CLP-315
colour laser printer

#Offer available to customers who Flexirent equipment valued at $1499 or more between 15/05/09 and 30/06/09 and settle by the 15/07/09. Limit of one bonus per customer. Bonus item redeemed in store. Offer is subject to credit approval. Terms and conditions apply.

Purchase any MacBook or MacBook Pro with AppleCare Protection Plan and receive a copy of Microsoft Office 2008 Home & Student FREE!!

MacBook 13" White	FLEXIRENT. $18.92 per week^	RRP ~~$1649~~ $1599

13" MacBook 2.0GHz	FLEXIRENT. $24.23 per week^	RRP ~~$2099~~ $2049
13" MacBook 2.4GHz	FLEXIRENT. $29.08 per week^	RRP ~~$2549~~ $2499

MacBook Pro 15" 2.4GHz	FLEXIRENT. $36.00 per week^	RRP ~~$3199~~ $3124
MacBook Pro 15" 2.66GHz	FLEXIRENT. $44.08 per week^	RRP ~~$3999~~ $3924

^Flexirent prices are based on 36-month commercial rental or consumer lease. Includes GST. Subject to credit approval. Payable monthly. Conditions apply.

Divine Design Creative Services (03) 9387-2797

Australia's largest range of Mac & iPod products!

NOW OPEN 7 DAYS!

The NEW Wacom Intuos4 has arrived!

With its new design and features the Intuos4 is the finest pen tablet ever created by Wacom.

Discover the tool used by professionals to turn their ideas into reality. With a new design and features inspired by your feedback, Intuos4 represents the finest pen tablet experience ever created by Wacom. Find out why millions of creative professionals trust Wacom with their ideas.

Small 4″ x 6″		RRP ~~$378~~ **$349**
Medium 6″ x 9″	FLEXIRENT. $6.92 per week^	RRP ~~$598~~ **$559**
Large 8″ x 13″	FLEXIRENT. $9.00 per week^	RRP ~~$798~~ **$739**
X-Large 12″ x 19″	FLEXIRENT. $14.77 per week^	RRP ~~$1328~~ **$1229**

Cintiq 12WX Interactive Pen Display

- Combines the advantages of a wide-format LCD and the ability to work directly on the screen
- Pressure-sensitive pen tip and eraser gives you more control over your work
- Ten programmable Keys for quick access to keyboard shortcuts and menus

FLEXIRENT. $19.38 per week^ RRP ~~$1698~~ **$1649**

wacom®

Cintiq 21UX Interactive Pen Display

- 21.3″ high-resolution display and adjustable stand
- Work directly on the screen for a natural paper like experience
- Ideal for professional photographers, illustrators and designers

FLEXIRENT. $38.77 per week^ RRP ~~$3498~~ **$3399**

Visa, MasterCard, Diners & Amex accepted. **No credit card surcharge!**

Ph: (03) 9818 2100 826 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn Victoria

Streetwise and the Streetwise Logo are registered trademarks of Streetwise Software Pty. Ltd. Mac and iPod are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.
Prices and specifications correct 5/5/09, but may be subject to change without notice. Errors and omissions excepted.

My Mac

My Mac Sydney
20 Bronte Rd
Bondi Junction, NSW, 2022
T. (02) 8383 1600
F. (02) 9386 9381
www.mymac.com.au

My Mac Melbourne
172 - 192 Flinders St
Melbourne, VIC, 3000
T. (03) 9662 9666
F. (03) 9662 9855
www.mymac.com.au

Come And Check Our New Products In-Store.

MacBook
From $2,099.00

MacBook Air
From $2,899.00

iPods
From $65.00

iPod shuffle
4GB just $129.00

iSkin Solo iPhone 3G $49.95

iSkin Touch iPod touch $54.95

incase Slider iPhone 3G $49.95

incase Sports Armband iPod touch $59.95

Griffin iTrip Auto Smartscan $149.95

iSkin Groove iPod nano $54.95

iSkin Cruise iPod nano $54.95

incase Sports Armband iPod classic $59.95

incase Slider iPod touch $49.95

Monster Cable 250FM Transmitter $199.95

Monster Beats by Dr DRE $599.95

Monster Turbine in-ear $279.95

Shure SE 210 $249.95

Shure SE 115 $199.95

Sennheiser CX300 mkII $99.95

V-Moda Vibe $199.95

VERS 2X $299.95

Kanto iPair 5 $599.95

Kanto SYD 5 $549.95

Bose Soundock $549.00

'yes' OPTUS Premium Dealer

Premium Reseller

iPhone 3G

There's an app for just about anything.

8GB iPhone 3G

$0[1]

over 24-months on the Optus $79 cap for iPhone 3G

Visit your local My Mac store today.

My Mac Melbourne, 172 - 192 Flinders St, Melbourne VIC, T. (03) 9662 9666

My Mac Sydney, 20 Bronte Rd, Bondi Junction, Sydney NSW, T. (02) 8383 1600

'yes' OPTUS Premium Dealer

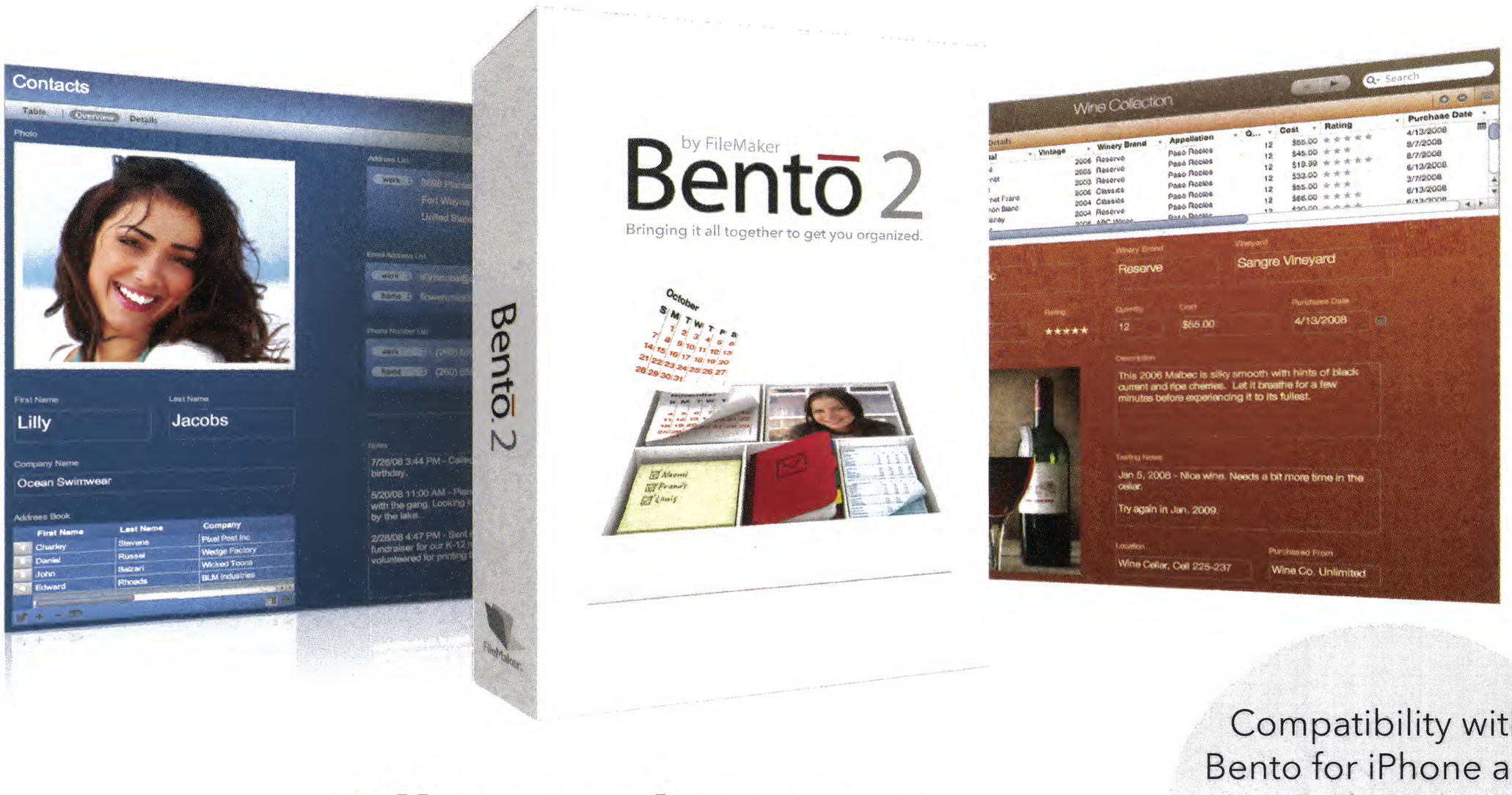
My Mac
www.mymac.com.au

Terms and Conditions. 1. 'yes' $79 Cap + Unlimited Text for iPhone 3G: Copyright© 2008 Apple Inc. All rights reserved. Requires 24-month connection with a minimum monthly Cap amount of $79 for the iPhone 3G 8GB. Minimum total cost over 24 months is **$1896**. Included value may be used for National Voice and Video Calls, Standard international SMS, Voicemail, 1800, 13 and 1300 numbers after which these services are free up to a maximum of the $550 per billing period. Cap Included value excludes some call and message types including calls to national fixed or GSM mobile services that then divert/switch or re-route overseas. When you reach your Cap included value, your calls are charged at standard Plan call rates. Included value excludes all other call and message types. **Optus 3G/HSPA Service:** Use of Optus 3G/HSPA Services is only available with compatible handsets and Optus 3G/HSPA SIM card. To access 3G services on iPhone, you must be in a 3G/HSPA coverage area. The Apple iPhone will not provide you with access to 3G services in Optus 3G/HSPA service areas where a dual band (UMTS2100/UMTS900) 3G/HSPA handset is required. For coverage details on 3G/HSPA please see www.optus.com.au/coverage. If connection is not maintained for 24 months, early cancellation fees apply. Offer applies to new and credit-approved customers only. While stocks last. Offer ends 30/04/09.

AL09062 04/09

Meet Bentō® 2

The new personal database from FileMaker that's as easy to use as a Mac.



All together now.

Compatibility with Bento for iPhone and iPod touch*

**NEW Bento App sold separately through the iTunes App Store*

Bring together Address Book, iCal, Mail, and more!

Now you can organize your important information—from contacts and calendars, to emails and events, to files and photos—all in one place.

The perfect complement to your spreadsheet.

If you're managing lists in Microsoft Excel or iWork Numbers, you can easily bring them into Bento to view your information in beautiful Bento forms, get easy iTunes-style searching, instant sorting, quick summary stats, and much more!

Get organized with style.

Even if you're brand new to the Mac community or to databases, it's never been easier to get organized thanks to ready-to-use templates and elegant themes designed by Mac artists.

Buy Bento at a store near you, or visit www.filemaker.com.au/bentoMac to buy Online - Only AU$79

© 2008 FileMaker, Inc. All rights reserved. FileMaker, the file folder logo, Bento and the Bento logo are registered trademarks of FileMaker, Inc. in the US and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

FileMaker.

⌘-A

014 Chris Oaten
The iPhone stays

⌘-V

017 *AMW* readers
Got something to say?

⌘-I

038 Danny Gorog
Confounding codecs

⌘-Y

042 Martin Levins
Resistance is futile

⌘-L

060 Michael Jenkins
The cloud is green

⌘-U

074 Dave Bullard
Tweeking iTunes

⌘-Q

078 The mystery writer
Macs rule. Period.

⌘-N

021 iPhone 3.0 comes into focus, OS X botnets on the loose, Bento for iPhone

⌘-1

030 Sound decisions
Chris Oaten wears his ears out trialling audio gear

⌘-2

040 Gadget Central
Recession be damned. *Australian Macworld* goes shopping.

⌘-3

044 High Definition. Highly defined.
Christopher Breen runs readers through everything they need to know about HD camcorders but were too busy to ask.

⌘-F

⌘-?

053 Audio roundtable, reader questions answered, maximising Mac mini for HD TV, installers 101

⌘-J

063 Wacom Intuos 4
4½

065 Titanium 10 Pro
4

066 Nikon Coolpix P90
4½

067 Olympus mju Tough 8000
4

068 Sony HDR-XR520VE
4½

069 Panasonic SDR-S26
3½

070 Epson 4880 printer
4

071 Elgato turbo.264 HD
5

072 Norton Internet Security for Mac
3½

072 Logitech diNovo Mac edition
3½

073 Targus File Share Cable
4½

073 Verbatim Tuneboard
3½

Computer help, home delivered.

Online now **www.nextbyte.com.au/store**

Whether you have just purchased a new Mac or simply want to get the most out of it, Next Byte in conjunction with gizmo can provide convenient on site assistance for as little as $149.

PayPal®

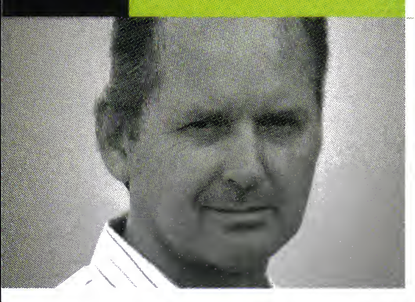
VISA MasterCard AMERICAN EXPRESS

The ultimate Apple experience.

Visit our Online Store at **www.nextbyte.com.au/store** or call **1300 361 119**

Premium Reseller

next byte®



Chris Oaten maintains an unshakable faith in Apple's genius. No matter what anyone says. Even himself.

The iPhone stays, OK?

Japanese industrialist, entrepeneur and management innovator Konosuke Matsushita, in the early days of building his empire, had a mantra regarding customer service, which included the following: "Don't sell customers goods that they are attracted to, sell them goods that will benefit them".

Matsushita ran a company called Matsushita Electric Corporation. You probably know the company better as Panasonic.

I was reminded of Matsushita's words when reading through responses to the *Australian Macworld* reader survey. Clearly, many survey respondents want a magazine that benefits them in practical ways.

They want to be informed, advised and through the experience of other users, become better able to manage their own computing challenges.

There were some very interesting comments offered, too. Obviously, when we were constructing the survey, we didn't make enough allowance for respondents to voice their opinions (sorry 'bout that) - and so a great many respondents took the trouble to use whatever text field they could find to air their views. Good on you.

There were many who wanted a return to the Q&A section in the Help pages. Well, you got it. Turn to page 58 to see your request fulfilled.

Many respondents wanted to see more coverage on security. You got it. Turn to page 24, where you'll find independent security consultant Neal Wise explaining some security issues relating to the Mac platform. I won't make any apologies for the technical nature of Neal's articles, which I intend to run each month. Fact is, computer security is a vexing issue and you can simplify explanations only so far before they become meaningless. Neal tells it how it is. I trust you'll welcome his contributions to the magazine.

We also welcome Dave Bullard as a regular contributor to *AMW* and his first column appears on page 74. Dave will hunt down software, hardware and tips on better audio for Mac users.

This is the start of my response to not only the survey results but feedback I've been getting via mail, email and discussions with *AMW* forum members.

But there's one thing I'm not budging on. Quite a few respondents didn't mince words when it came to *AMW* 's coverage of the iPhone and related stories. As one person said: "This is Macworld, not iPhoneworld".

So let's consider the iPhone for a moment. What is this thing? It has a display, an input method, memory, and a means to get data in and out of it. In my book, that makes it a computer. Albeit a handheld one. What's more, it has an operating system. But no ordinary operating system. It runs a variant of OS X, and that, in my book, makes it not only a computer but also the best kind of computer - a Mac. And with iPhone 3.0, it will become even more Mac-like. Take a look at page 21 to see what I mean.

The iPhone therefore deserves the same kind of attention that other Mac hardware gets and I believe *AMW* has always done a pretty good job of balancing its coverage of the iPhone.

AMW's position on the iPhone isn't reliant merely on a definition. It has a lot to do with trends. There's a growing expectation that Apple will bring a tablet computer to market; possibly, something resembling an over-sized iPhone. I'm not about to describe this mythical beast any further. I've already done enough in this paragraph to fuel rumours and this is something I try to avoid.

I believe, however, that Apple will pay increasing attention to computing portability and this is due in no small part to the constantly rising popularity of laptops over desktop computing solutions along with the tremendous success of the iPhone and the wave of popularity being enjoyed by all smartphone makers – a popularity helped in no small way by the iPhone.

How so? When the iPhone launched, it enjoyed an unprecedented level of attention for a consumer device. Media coverage was widespread and comprehensive. One outcome of this, of course, was that iPhones flew off the shelves in most of the countries in which it was released. Another outcome was a rise in consumer awareness of what a smartphone could do. Suddenly, the smartphone market evolved into a hotbed of competition as makers brought their own works of genius to market to share the spotlight the iPhone was enjoying. And many of them came up with some very good products.

So we'll continue to support a device that I expect will be seen in years to come as one of the most influential consumer electronics products of the early 21st century. Indeed, by many, it already is seen in this light.

This is why *Australian Macworld*'s iPhone coverage is here to stay – because this magazine has always covered Apple developments. And despite whatever other changes you may see to this magazine in the coming months, covering Apple's market position is not something we're about to abandon.

Rock out with Retro
iPod dock AM/FM Table radio

Wake up Happy
Dual Alarm AM/FM clock radio

iHome™

Live Life Loud™

Let there be light
iPod Speaker dock and light

Space Saving
Wake, Sleep, Charge and Play

Getaway and Groove
Travel speaker inbuilt alarm clock

Power and Passion
iPod Premium dock/clock radio,
iPhone compatible

Phone Valet
Bluetooth, Hands free
clock/dock radio for iPhone/mobile

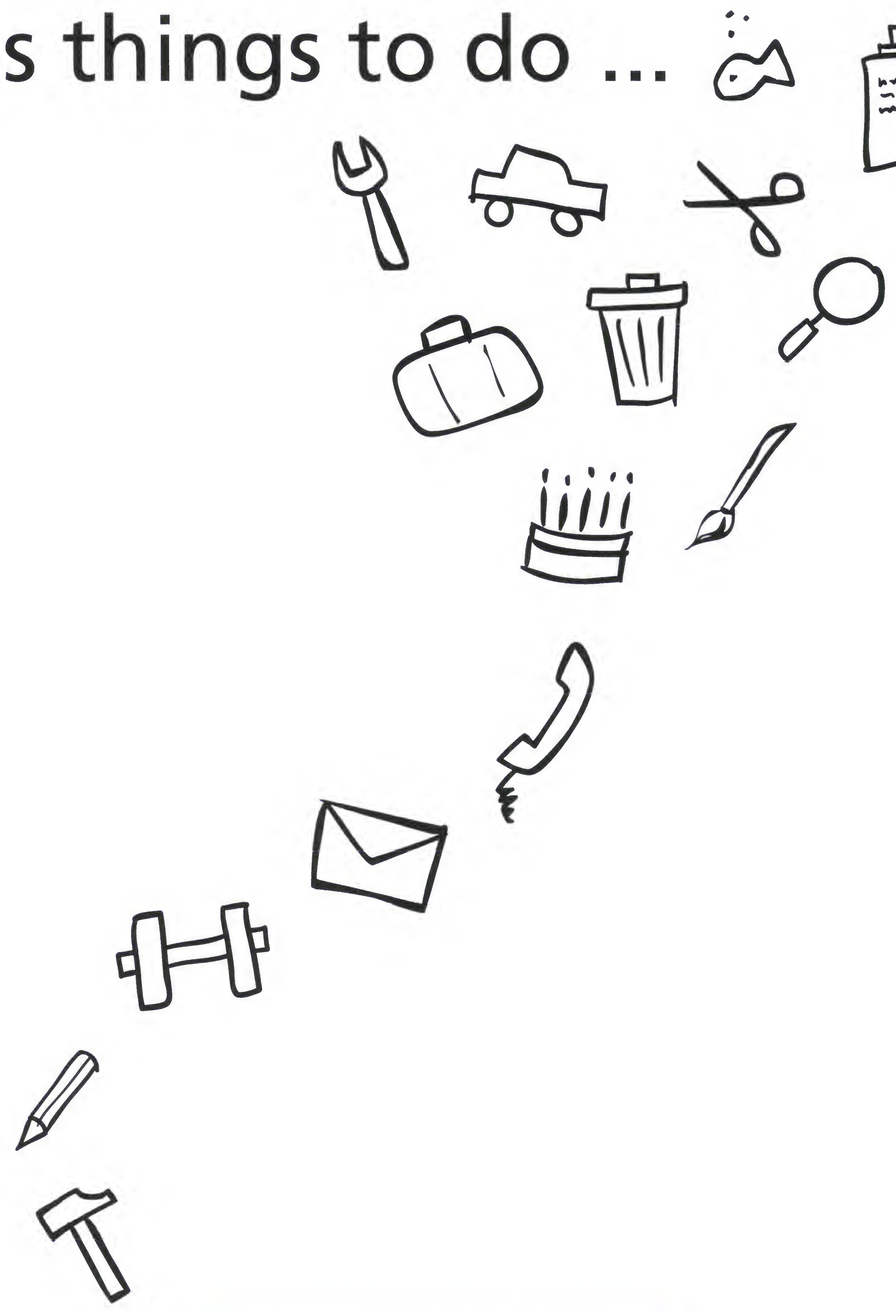
#1 Brand in iPod/MP3 Speaker Systems

www.ihomeaudio.com

Made for iPod

CONEXUS Distributed by Conexus www.conexus.com.au Ph 02 9975 0900

Everyone has things to do ...



Things

Mac + iPhone

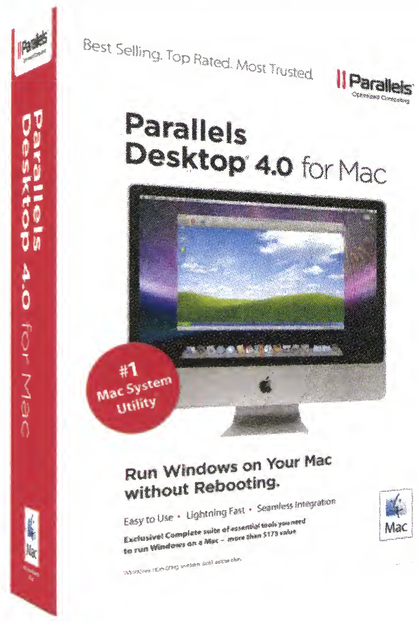
Task management has never been this easy. Things for Mac lets you organize your to-dos in an elegant and intuitive way. Things for iPhone and iPod touch is the App Store's most popular paid task manager and syncs wirelessly with its desktop counterpart.

Get your free trial of Things for Mac:
www.culturedcode.com/amw

Macworld BEST OF SHOW 2009

Macworld 4½

Cultured Code



Each month Conexus is giving a prize to the *Australian Macworld* reader who submits what we deem to be the most interesting letter. This month, the prize is a copy of Parallels Desktop 4.0 for Mac, which offers its user the most complete Windows-on-Mac solution in the industry.

Optimise your Windows-on-Mac experience with a turbo-charged virtualisation engine and the latest Mac hardware support. Use essential tools including a complete protection suite and Parallels' trademark easy-to-use OS integration and instant data access technologies that make Windows programs run seamlessly, safer and more Mac-like.

For those times when a Windows software solution is unavoidable, Parallels Desktop for Mac is the way to go.

Letters should be emailed to amweditor@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. Comments posted to the forums on www.macworld.com.au are also eligible for the prize. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Conexus letter of the month

Too much content seen but not heard

I am an avid Apple consumer and have a MacBook and iPhone (and while I have the capacity, there is no way I will install Windows-related paraphernalia using Boot Camp or other emulators on my MacBook).

However, I just wanted to drop an email regarding the woeful inaccessibility of iTunes content at present.

As a deaf consumer, I am simply unable to watch content from iTunes unless it is available for download with closed captions.

Recently, I went through the iTunes store to check on the captioning levels. I was shocked to find that:

1. Out of the 1061 movies that I identified on iTunes as at 29 April, only 91 were closed captioned! (or less than 9 per cent).
2. Out of the New and Noteworthy movies that were highlighted on the iTunes store as at 29 April, none were available with closed captions!
3. No TV shows are available with closed captions as at 29 April.
4. Similar very low levels of captioned content are available for the iTunes University section and for other video podcasts.

I have tried discussing this with Apple but when there isn't a formal complaints department (or process) - it is pretty difficult to get anywhere with a complaint.

Perhaps you and your team may have more luck on my behalf?

I certainly believe that this is a blatant disregard for my human rights. Such discriminatory practices against deaf and hearing-impaired users harks back to the bad old days when we were unable to access basic media (such as TV) and it is extremely disappointing that we are being left out in the cold again with the change over to new media.

Michael Lockrey
via email

On the surface, this is a slight against hearing-impaired users. I expect the onus is on the content providers and not Apple to deliver content with closed captions. In any case, Apple didn't offer an official response in time for publication but a spokesperson did point out that iTunes was the first online store to offer content with closed captions and suggested a visit to www.apple.com/au/accessibility/itunes/hearing.html for further information. Sorry, Michael. I wish I could have done more. — CO

Another fix to the fore

I loved Kirk McElhern's article regarding Fixing Startup Problems in the 03.09 issue and wanted to add my own tip that I always use as a first step due to it's simplicity. Basically, when I get a machine that is exhibiting startup issues the first thing I do is create a new user account and log into it. This often resolves the issue. Also, to the "Tools of the Tirade" (the sidebar to the same article) I would like to suggest AppleJack (http://applejack.sourceforge.net/). It can be a bit ninja but I find it invaluable.

Scott J.
South Melbourne

The eternal question

I am aware that an upgrade was made to the iMac in March. Do you think it is likely that Apple will be releasing a new iMac with a quad-core (or 8 core) processor in the near future? I am very keen to get a new iMac but have been waiting until a new model with a significant redesign is released. Can you please advise when you think this may be?

Tracey Hamilton
via email

I don't have an inside track of what's happening in Cupertino's corridors of power. My expectation, however, is that until there's a 24-core or 32-core Mac Pro, we won't see an 8-core iMac. I wouldn't hold your breath waiting for one. — CO

TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Mentor letter of the month 1. Instructions on how to enter form part of these conditions of entry. 2. To enter send tips or queries to amweditor@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Command – V". Entries will be judged by the editorial staff of *Australian Macworld*. The judges' decision in relation to any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. Chance plays no part in determining the winner(s). Each entry will be individually judged based on its degree of interest. 4. Employees, their immediate families and agencies associated with this competition are not permitted to enter. 5. The Promoter accepts no responsibility for late or misdirected entries. 6. The best entry/entries as determined by the judges will win the prize(s). 7. The Promoter is neither responsible nor liable for any change in the value of the prize occurring between the publish date and the date the prize(s) is claimed. 8. The prize(s) is not transferable and will not be exchanged for cash. 9. The winner(s) will be notified by mail. 10. All entries become the property of the Promoter. 11. The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided in connection with this competition is governed by the Privacy Notice 12. The Promoter is Niche Media Pty Ltd of 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 Ph 03 9948 4900, (ABN 13 064 613 529).

⌘-V

Audio nightmare

I love the new MacBook and MacBook Pro. I upgraded to the lovely MBP and for the first few days you could not have wiped the smile off my face! But I wanted to listen to some of my iTunes tracks and here is where the saga begins.

The audio out jack on the MBP looks standard enough but my audio jack just didn't fit snugly. My logic at that point? Old headphones! And thus a good excuse for an upgrade to some high-end acoustics.

I then purchased some headphones, plugged them in and... same problem. Just knock the connection ever so slightly and the sound reverts from headphones to the laptop's speakers.

On examination, the fit is not snug. When tried on a mate's MacBook it clicks in and won't budge. So I made an appointment at the Chatswood Genius Bar. At one point I had them all crowded around and we ended up cracking open three new MBPs to find the same problem with about six different headphones. I use the audio out frequently - it's an essential. I took the gear home while they began an escalation process within Apple, and the Chatswood business manager has been great. I did some research (via Google) and it appears this is a worldwide, huge problem! So MacBook buyers, beware.

Scott McDonnell
Campbelltown

Not to suggest for a moment that Scott's problem isn't real but I've recently tried new MacBooks and MacBook Pros and couldn't replicate the problem. Perhaps the issue at stake is not clear to me. What's your experience? Let us know via amweditor@niche.com.au — CO

Flower power

I was reading the article "Digital Imaging, Flat Out" in the 03.09 issue.

There were a few examples of different items that could be scanned.

One of these was a hibiscus flower. As far as I know it was actually a Bougainvillea flower. The author's description of the plant is very similar to that of a Bougainvillea so I was wondering whether it was in fact one of those.

Andrew Baker
Wauchope

Expert in the field

I really enjoyed the article in the 03.09 issue titled "Digital Imaging, flat out". However, while I may not be as knowledgeable about computers as the author, Barrie Smith, I know a bouganvillea flower when I see one! Anyway, great stuff, your mag has taught me heaps.

Elaine
via email

Elaine, Andrew, you are absolutely correct. Here's what article author Barrie Smith had to say when asked about the botanical bumbling: "They are quite right. I am to gardening as Shakespeare was to nucular science, to quote Dubya". — CO

AUSTRALIAN Macworld

June 2009 / Issue No. 136

Publisher
Niche Media

Associate Publisher
Nick Harris
nick.harris@niche.com.au
03 9948 4976

Editor
Chris Oaten
chris.oaten@niche.com.au

Business Development Manager
Liana Pappas
liana.pappas@niche.com.au
03 9948 4974

Designer
Hannah Ogilvie
hannah.ogilvie@niche.com.au

Production Coordinator
Alison Copley
alison.copley@niche.com.au

Prepress
Emma Meagher
emma.meagher@niche.com.au

IT Manager
Joel Robertson
joel.robertson@niche.com.au

(niche):

Australian Macworld
is a publication of Niche Media Pty Ltd
ABN 13 064 613 529
170 Dorcas Street,
South Melbourne, Victoria 3205
Tel: 03 9948 4900 / Fax: 03 9948 4999

Chairman and Publisher
Nicholas Dower

Managing Director
Paul Lidgerwood

Financial Controller
Sonia Jurista

Studio Design Manager
Keely Atkins
keely.atkins@niche.com.au

Subscription Inquiries
Free Call: 1800 804 160
subscriptions@niche.com.au

CTP/Print
Bluestar print - Australia
03 8514 6000
ISSN 1329-9484

Digital Library Images supplied by PhotoDisc (www.photodisc.com) Australian Macworld has reprint rights to Macworld, a Mac Publishing LLC title. Material appearing in Australian Macworld is copyright and reproduction in whole or in part without express permission from the publishers will result in litigation. Australian Macworld is published under licence from Mac Publishing LLC, San Francisco, California. Editorial items appearing in Australian Macworld that were originally published in the US edition of Macworld are the copyright property of Mac Publishing LLC, which reserves all rights. Copyright ©2004 Mac Publishing LLC. Macworld is a trademark of Mac Publishing LLC. Products presented in Gadget Central are included for information purposes only and carry no endorsement from Australian Macworld's editorial team. This issue of Australian Macworld may contain offers, competitions, surveys, subscription offers and premiums that, if you choose to participate, require you to provide information about yourself. If you provide information about yourself to NICHE MEDIA, NICHE MEDIA will use the information to provide you with the products or services you have requested (such as subscriptions). We may also provide this information to contractors who provide the products and services on our behalf (such as mail houses and suppliers of subscriber premiums and promotional prizes). We do not sell your information to third parties under any circumstances, however the suppliers of some of these products and services may retain the information we provide for future activities of their own, including direct marketing. NICHE MEDIA will also retain your information and use it to inform you of other NICHE MEDIA promotions and publications from time to time. If you would like to know what information NICHE MEDIA holds about you please contact:
The Privacy Officer, NICHE MEDIA PTY LTD, 170 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205.

COMING TO AUSTRALIAN MACWORLD

***AMW* digital imaging roundtable.**
We ask the experts the questions that most trouble our readers.

***AMW* lab:** Desktop storage. You can't have enough external storage. *AMW* tests the leading products.

To advertise. Call Liana Pappas 03 9948 4974.
To subscribe. Free-call 1800 804 160.

COMING TO DESKTOP

You can touch this. Desktop delves into interactive design - just what is it, really?

Especially for you. Desktop looks at how designers can make the most of some special finishing touches.

To advertise. Call Chantelle Ford 03 9948 4984.
To subscribe. Free-call 1800 804 160.

DC09
DESKTOP CREATE:2009™

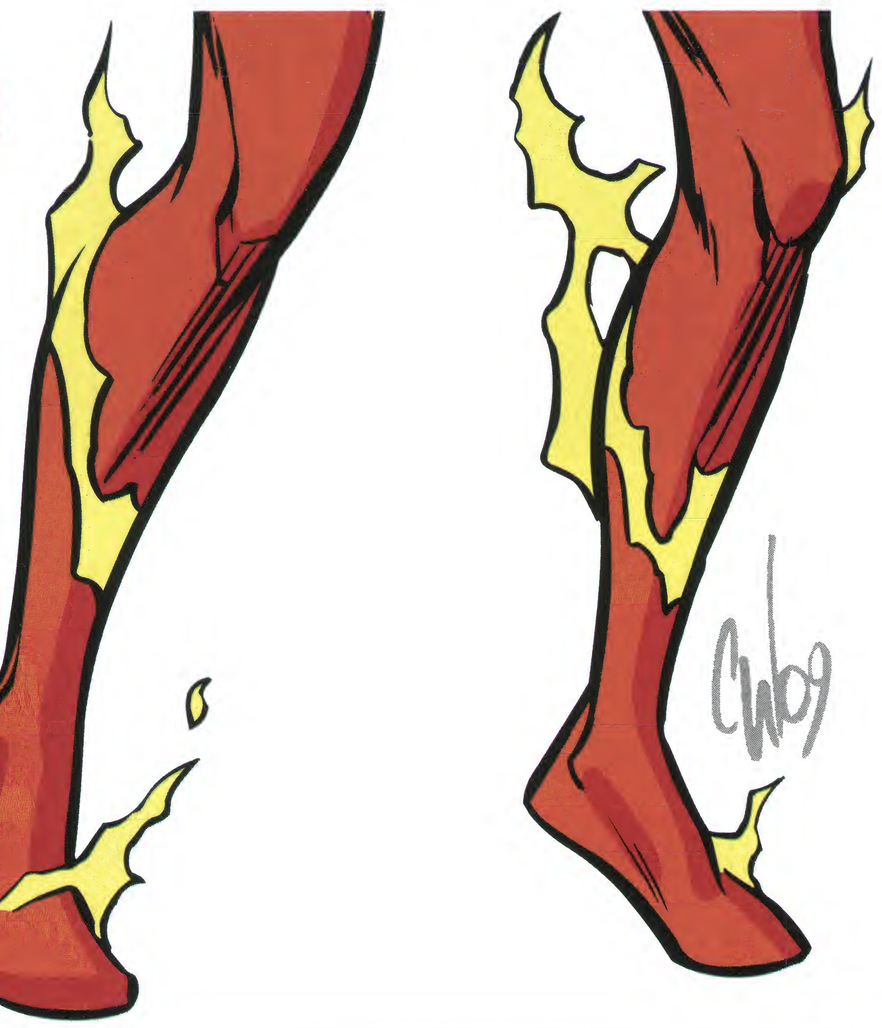
Call for entries closing soon! Get your entry in before 30 June to share in up to

$50,000 in cash and prizes

Photography, Illustration, Website Design, Design for Print, Packaging Design, Digital Media, Multimedia, Fashion & more!

Head to the website now for more information or to enter

www.createawards.com.au



SPONSORS:

The Drawing Book. Give your idea its own image.

galaxy design

!mpact digital For Digital Printing with Impact!

Kodak

qantm COLLEGE

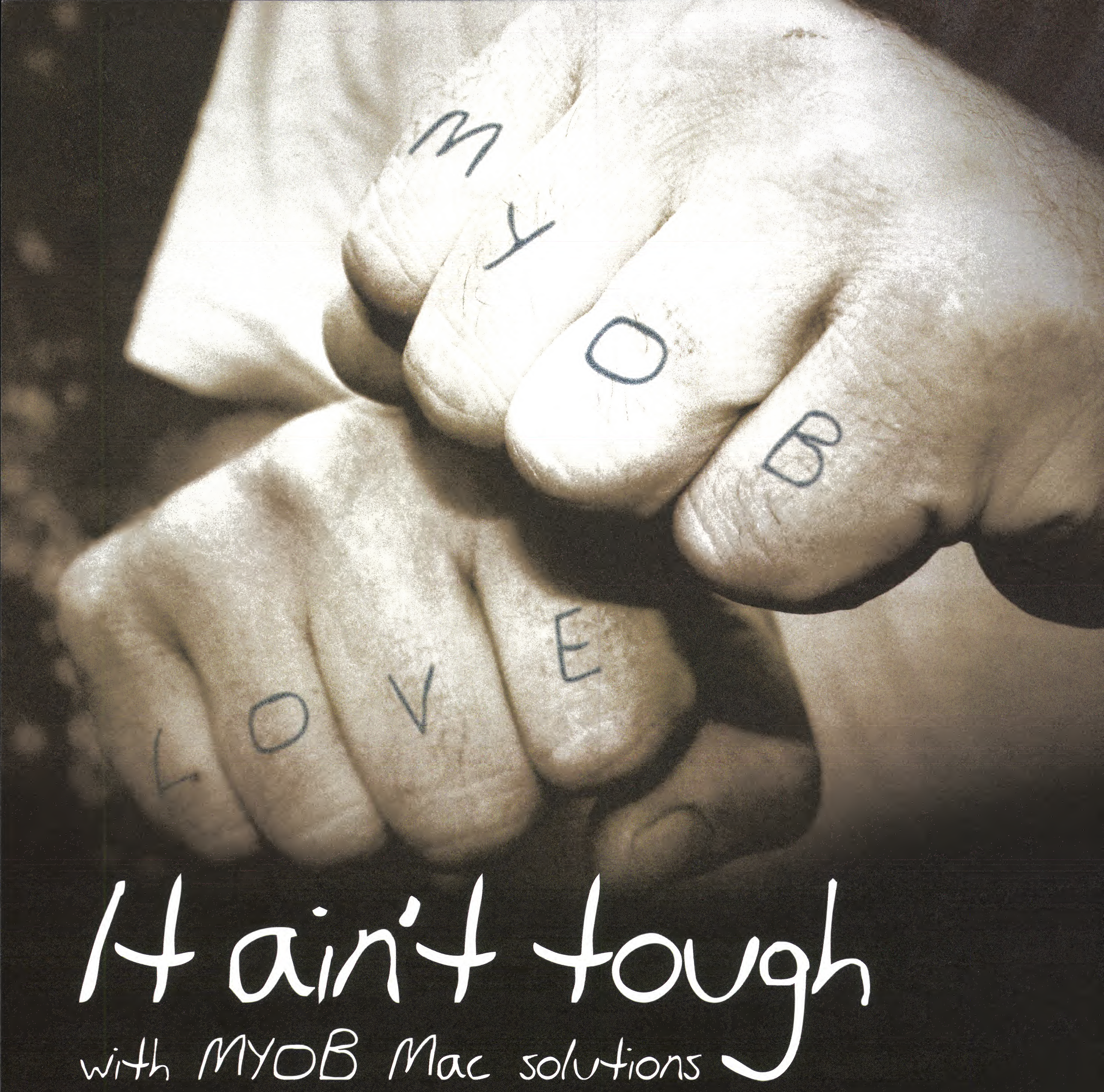
wacom

UNIVERSAL UNIVERSAL MUSIC

PARTNERS:

AGIdeas

Semi-Permanent



It's real easy doin' your books on a Mac.

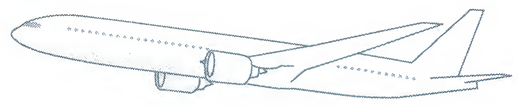
Get heavy with GST, BAS, time billing and payroll using MYOB FirstEdge and MYOB AccountEdge business management software.

If we still need to twist your arm visit **myob.com.au/easyonamac**

MYOB®

Mind Your Own Business. Smarter on a Mac.

MK8080/1108



7

Seven reasons you will want iPhone 3.0

[APPLE]

You're browsing a web page in Safari on your iPhone when a dialog box pops up - your friend has just sent an instant message asking if you want to catch dinner and a movie. You quickly surf over to a listing of movie times, select your preferred option, copy it, and paste it into an SMS message to your friend, along with the location of the movie theatre.

Another friend of yours wanted to go to that movie, too, but you can't quite remember whom. So you pull up your iPhone's search function and type in the name of the movie - turns out one of your other friends sent you an email about it. Jumping back to the iPhone's text message program, you forward the SMS with the details.

Impossible? Well, with the current incarnation of the iPhone operating system, it certainly is. But as Apple has shown repeatedly since introducing the iPhone in 2007, the company doesn't sit still when it comes to adding new features to its mobile platform.

Welcome to life with iPhone 3.0. Apple has unveiled the latest version of its iPhone software, slated for a mid-year release. What can you expect iPhone 3.0 to deliver? Read on.

Your apps will keep working even when they're closed.

To date, the iPhone OS has greatly resembled the Mac OS in the days before MultiFinder unlocked the ability to let you run multiple applications simultaneously. With a handful of exceptions, the iPhone is a single-task device: the program that you're running in the foreground has all of the device's - and, by extension, your - attention.

Of course, a few of Apple's own programs aren't bound by this restriction. Mail, for example, can retrieve your messages in the background; Clock's timers and alarms would be pretty useless if they ran only in the foreground; SMS can interrupt what you're doing when somebody sends you a text message; and, naturally, the Phone application can supersede any other running program when a call comes in. Until now, though, these capabilities have been available to Apple's apps, and Apple's apps alone.

iPhone 3.0 changes the game for third-party developers by introducing the concept of push notification. First mentioned by Apple a year ago at the 2008 Worldwide Developers Conference, push notification allows apps to take advantage of some of the same features that Apple's built-in programs have long sported.

With the push notification system, the iPhone maintains a persistent data connection to an Apple server and uses that link to shuttle data to the iPhone. Developers can take advantage of this connection to notify users of new information even when their application isn't running.

That notification can come in three forms: an informational badge, like the one you see on Apple's Mail, Text, and Phone applications when you have new messages; a custom alert sound (ESPN, for example, has previewed an app that plays the sports network's distinctive chime whenever there's a score update); or a pop-up dialog box like the one you see when you receive a text message. Developers can also combine several of these alert types if they choose.

That means no more firing up the RSS reader just to see if there are any new stories to read; being able to receive instant messages no matter what you're doing;

and not having to constantly refresh Safari for the latest sports scores or stock figures.

You'll battle your friends head-to-head. Between its cell phone connection and Wi-Fi capabilities, the iPhone is pretty well-equipped in terms of connectivity. iPhone 3.0 will add yet another weapon to the iPhone's networking arsenal: Bluetooth.

So far, the iPhone's Bluetooth system has been mostly reserved for using hands-free headsets for making phone calls. iPhone 3.0 brings new life to Bluetooth by using the wireless protocol to enable peer-to-peer connections that allow iPhones to talk directly with each other, without any need to resort to Internet connections.

That means that you and your iPhone-equipped friend can go head-to-head in a game even when you lack an Internet connection. (Users of the second-generation iPod touch are also welcome to the party - iPhone 3.0 will activate Bluetooth technology already built into that device.) Even better, the peer-to-peer connection doesn't require the cumbersome Bluetooth pairing process, and the system uses Apple's no-configuration Bonjour networking to let you set up games with ease.

Peer-to-peer connection isn't just for games either. All developers will have access to the functionality, so expect to see some innovative applications that take advantage of this newfound ability. Imagine being able to exchange contact information seamlessly, quickly chat with people in close proximity, or possibly even collaborate on a document with your colleagues.

You'll get more done. Not everything in iPhone 3.0 is fun and games; some of it's about helping you be more productive. Then again, productivity isn't always about work. Sometimes, it's just about helping you waste less time with pointless tasks. The new version of the iPhone software includes several new features that will help you ramp up your efficiency.

At long last, the iPhone will allow for copying and pasting text, giving users around the world a reason to breathe a collective sigh of relief. With iPhone 3.0, you'll no longer need to scribble down random pieces of data on whatever scrap of paper you have at hand, just to laboriously retype it in another application.

Apple has worked hard to make copy and paste a natural part of the iPhone's interface: just double-tap on the text you want to select and the iPhone highlights that text giving you a pair of handles for adjusting your selection. A bubble also appears, providing options for cut, copy, and paste. Apple has also added other features you might have missed from OS X's Edit menu, such as Select All and Undo; to use the latter, you just shake the phone to bring up a dialog box.

As welcome an addition as copy and paste is, it's not the only new feature that'll boost your daily efficiency. Those users who prefer the widescreen keyboard that appears in Safari when you flip the phone sideways will be happy to know it will be available in Apple's other text-focused applications such as Notes, Mail, and Text's replacement, Messages.

You'll have more ways to communicate. Speaking of Messages, the new name of what will be the former SMS app reflects iPhone 3.0's juiced-up support for sending messages over the cell network. The new Messages application has much the same look as its predecessor, but it adds support for Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS). Earlier versions of the iPhone OS, rather perplexingly, could support sending only text messages, but iPhone 3.0 remedies this problem.

With multimedia messaging, you can send a picture from your iPhone's camera or from your photo albums to any one of your contacts. Pictures aren't the only thing you can send, either - this is called multi-media messaging for good reason. You can send sound files (such as those recorded with the iPhone's new Voice Memo application); location information from Google Maps; and contact information, in the standard vCard format used by OS X's Address Book. It's possible that this expanded messaging capability will come with a greater cost - MMS messages involve a lot more data to transfer than simple text messages, and service providers tend to charge for that sort of thing. Then again, carriers could come up with some sort of package deal covering both SMS and MMS messaging.

Messaging isn't the only improvement in the iPhone's communication skills. Users now have the ability to send multiple pictures via email, a much-requested feature. In addition to its newfound peer-to-peer networking capability, the iPhone will support the A2DP Bluetooth profile, which allows the transmission of stereo sound to Bluetooth headphones. (Unfortunately, neither A2DP nor MMS will work on the original-model iPhone due to hardware incompatibilities.)

Apple also says that the iPhone 3.0 software includes all the necessary ingredients for enabling tethering - that is, sharing your iPhone's 3G Internet connection

with your Mac or PC. But Apple's efforts are only half the battle - the feature will require cooperation from cell carriers.

You'll get where you're going more easily. The iPhone already helps you reduce the number of gadgets you need to carry around on a daily basis. It has saved you from having to find room in your bag or pockets for a separate phone, iPod, or digital camera (or even a laptop, in some cases). But one device that you haven't quite been able to get rid of is your car's GPS navigation unit.

iPhone 3.0 aims to add that GPS unit to the pile of other gadgets you leave behind.

The iPhone's Maps app is one of its killer features, especially since the addition of location-based features and the iPhone 3G's GPS chip. But using the iPhone for directions while driving has always been a dicey proposition. For one thing, it requires repeated interaction to use, which can be dangerous (and in many places, illegal) if you're driving alone; for another, if you happen to hit a dead zone while trucking along, your maps - dependent on data downloaded from Google over the Internet - could go kaput. Maps also lacks certain niceties, such as a robotic voice telling you to turn left or right and the ability to automatically recalculate your route if you end up missing the exit while you're fooling with your iPhone.

However, in iPhone 3.0, navigation apps are officially a possibility, although developers will have to provide their own map data. Since map data is expensive and often a hefty download, expect developers to take advantage of the new in-application commerce framework Apple is introducing, in which you'll have to shell out for each of the maps you want.

Makers of turn-by-turn direction apps aren't the only ones who will benefit from iPhone 3.0. Developers can now also embed Google Maps directly into their applications with the same controls and functions as the full Maps application. The result is bound to make location an even more pervasive part of the iPhone experience.

You'll find things more easily. Let's face it: tracking down a particular piece of information on the iPhone can be a time-consuming proposition. Even if you remember that you saw a certain address in an email last week, there has been no way to quickly search your messages to find it. While Apple finally added the ability to search your contacts in iPhone 2.0, the use was limited; often, it was just as fast to scroll through the contacts as it was to search.

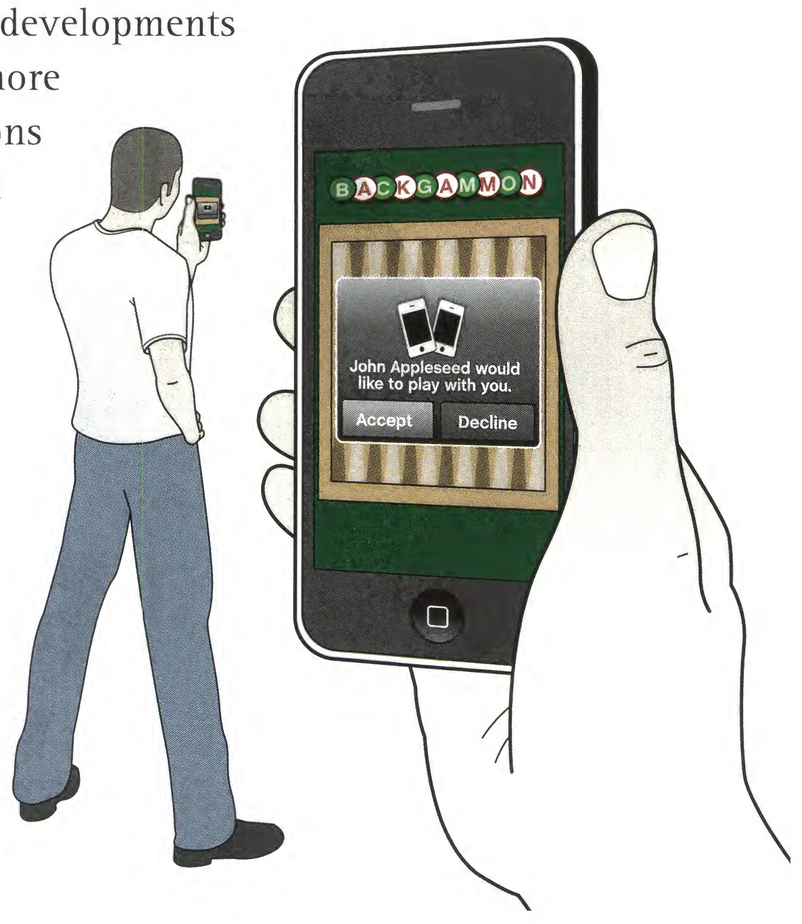
iPhone 3.0 gives search its due. Apple has added search boxes to most of its data-heavy applications, such as Notes, Calendar, iPod, and Mail. But there are some caveats. For example, while Mail can search the From, To, and Subject fields of your emails, it can't look inside the messages at the body text, meaning you'll have to at least remember who sent you that address you're looking for. An "All" option does allow you to search all three types of headers for the pertinent information, though, and - if you've got a compatible mail server - you also can extend the search to messages not currently downloaded to your iPhone.

In addition to the application-specific search, Apple has added a systemwide search function that it calls – unsurprisingly - Spotlight. Spotlight marks the first major change to the iPhone's Home screen since the introduction of multiple pages in iPhone 1.1.3. From the first Home screen, you can now slide left to bring up the Spotlight search screen. (In the row of dots showing your multiple Home screens, Spotlight is represented by a little magnifying glass icon.)

On the Spotlight screen, you just type your query into the search field and the iPhone will scour your data and bring up all the relevant matches. Like Spotlight on your Mac, it'll show you matching contact records, songs and other media from your iPod, Mail messages, and Calendar appointments. Tap on any result and the iPhone will launch the corresponding application and show you the matching item.

In addition, Spotlight will show you a list of applications that match your search string - at last somewhat simplifying the process of wading through eight Home screens full of apps just to find the one you're looking for. However, it's unknown as of yet whether or not third-party developers will be able to take advantage of the Spotlight search features to allow searching of data in their own applications.

You'll have more features to discover. Of course, we've just scratched the surface of the new features that the iPhone 3.0 update offers. Apple boasts that the forthcoming update brings more than 100 new features to consumers and 1000 programming tools to developers. Those two developments will likely inspire even more new and innovative functions for the device long beyond iPhone 3.0's upcoming release. — *Dan Moren*



In the May edition of Australian Macworld, reference was made in the Aussie iPhone apps story to the "Rain" app in the sidebar featuring developer Terry Monro. The full name is "Sleepmaker Rain" and it is a paid app, not free, as indicated in the story. Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.

Don't panic, but...

Could the first OS X botnet spell the end of complacency?

In January, security researchers identified the first OSX-based "botnet" - Iservices - in the wild. Botnets are ad-hoc, pseudo-networks of security-compromised, Internet-based systems or devices. Once compromised, these systems are controlled by a remote, Internet-based attacker. Botnets often originate by taking advantage of flaws in software functions accessible either locally by the user or remotely from the network.

Botnets are created to be remotely used, en masse, for nefarious purposes such as distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) against websites. This appears to be at least one of the intentions of this Mac-based botnet.

Many names, same outcome. Several anti-virus vendors identified the Iservices.A issue so, like much malware, it's known by several names: OSX/Krowi.A (Computer Associates), OSX/iWorkServ.A (F-Secure), OSX.Trojan.iServices.A (Intego), OSX/IWService (McAfee), OSX/iWorkS-Fam (Sophos), OSX.Iservice (Symantec) and OSX_KROWI.A (Trend). Shortly afterwards a similar variant (B) was identified.

The presence of the malware was also noticed by users who, upon hearing their Mac's fan winding up (we've all been there), noticed a running PHP interpreter process which was scripted to connect aggressively to a remote web server. Since potentially many Macs were executing this instruction for the attacker this would have potentially created a denial-of-service situation on the website targeted by the PHP script.

Interestingly, these IServices botnets begin by taking advantage of some of our easily misled human traits - greed and laziness. Both variants of Iservices gained access to the victim's system with the assistance of the victim themself thanks to their use of downloaded "WaReZ" from the Internet. WaReZ are illegal copies of commercial software.

Hitching a ride. For example, with the IServices.A issue, malware originated in a Trojan copy of Apple's free iWork '09 Trial made available through peer-to-peer file sharing. Victims of Iservices.A were retrieving the iWork '09 Trial from BitTorrent instead of directly downloading from Apple.

Iservices.A included in this Trojan version installs a complete working copy of the iWork '09 Trial, however, it includes an additional component named iWorkServices.pkg during the installation which introduces the "bot" to the victim's system. As with many OSX application installations, when the victim executes the Trojan iWork '09 Trial installer they're prompted for an administrator-level account username and password. Trojan Iservices.A's installer then records these Administrator credentials in a system directory for later re-use by a new system-level StartupItem called IWorkServices which it also creates.

Iservices.B uses a similar attack vector but is bundled with a BitTorrent-delivered pirate copy of Adobe Photoshop CS4 11.0. The Photoshop application itself may be unmodified but the bundled Photoshop application serial number "cracker" contains a similar install method to Iservices.A. In Iservices.B's case, a system-level StartupItem called DiVX is created and, as with the initial version of Iservices, the administrator's username and password used to execute the "cracker" is recorded for future use.

The scene is then set for potentially thousands of users to download and execute these modified applications. Once installed, a process connects from the victim's Mac to the botnet to receive instructions from the attacker. Iservice's connection was made to two specific hosts on non-standard ports which helped discovery of the issue. Iservices contains a simple command interpreter for the Lua programming language permitting the attacker to initiate activities on the victim's Mac. Iservices itself has functions defined to assist in marshalling the victim Mac into the botnet.

A quick check. It's pretty unlikely that this particular issue has affected you unless you downloaded the Trojan software. To be sure you're not hosting an unwelcome guest, you can find out using Terminal.app (in the Utilities folder) to look in /System/Library/StartupItems for files called DiVX or IWorkServices.

You were probably more likely to get the flying pig flu than the Iservices trojan. You would certainly know it if you installed either the iWork '09 Trial or Photoshop derived from suspicious sources. But just in case you want to exclude the possibility, perhaps as part of a troubleshooting routine, you can take a look for yourself by putting Terminal to work. Don't let the syntax put you off. It's really not difficult.

First open /Applications/Utilities/Terminal.app and then, at the shell prompt (username@hostname $) type the following, being careful to use the spaces:

```
sudo ls -lart /var/root/ /var/tmp/ /
Library/StartupItems/ | egrep -i
"divx|iworkservices"
```

Yes, all of that... "sudo" because you need Administrator (root) privileges to see into /var/root using ls (list) and then we look using the egrep command, case-insensitively, at the listing from the ls command for install traces of Iservices. The | characters you see are UNIX "pipes" which connect input and output of the commands above. Type

"shift" together with "backslash" to insert this character. Once the string is entered, you'll be prompted by sudo for your password. Once you provide the password - and you have a strong password, right? - remaining commands will be executed.

If you see nothing listed after running the above commands you probably didn't have the issue. If you do see something listed in the command output (unlikely other than an error for mistyping something :-) seek assistance from an expert. To close your Terminal session, type exit at the shell prompt.

To resolve these issues you may be tempted to download and use existing third-party removal tools for these Trojans. Doing so requires you to trust and execute code from an unknown source with Administrator-level privilege. Then again, if you're looking for a fix for an issue like this, some misplaced trust is probably what got you there in the first place.

Mitigating or detecting these types of issues is best attempted with use of both a quality anti-virus/anti-malware solution and use of a proper egress (outbound traffic) firewall in addition to Apple's various firewall options. It's also critical to attempt to validate and track ongoing downloaded software on an ongoing basis.

Until the last few years it's probably been OK - well, maybe not *really* - to operate OS X without an anti-virus/anti-malware solution. All anti-virus software has limitations and, on OS X, there's less of a history of focused research either because of the lack of perceived threat or lack of commercial interest by users.

Expect better bots. The Iservices Trojans suggest a future for more advanced malware than previous OS X malware. Iservices utilised smart tricks including an encrypted transport and an extendable scripting environment but was discovered due to its weird connection type.

This technical contradiction suggests multiple attackers being involved in its development and then its use. Expect future botnets on OS X to "hide in plain sight" on the network by using less detectable and obscure application transports such as DNS to reach the botnet.

Neal Wise breaks stuff for a living while serving as director at Melbourne IT Security consultancy Assurance.com.au. Neal has been a Mac user since 1988 and an Apple user since 1981.

Australian Macworld has invited Neal to explain security issues that affect Mac users. Feedback on Neal's column is most welcome at: amweditor@niche.com.au

CASIO®
SOUND TECHNOLOGY

The new generation series of Casio keyboards are the first keyboards in their class with the ability to sample up to 10 seconds of music from your iPod®. You can also use your Casio keyboard as an external speaker system for your iPod® & even play along to your favourite music!

CREATING MUSICIANS EVERYDAY.

www.soundtechnology.com.au

Casio is distributed by Shriro Australia Pty Ltd. Ph: 1300 768 112

iPod is a registered trademark of Apple Inc.

[NEWS]

Now it's roll-your-own app with Bento for iPhone

Filemaker has released a version of its consumer-grade database software, Bento, as an an app for iPhone, bringing users a new level of customisability among iPhone apps.

Few iPhone apps enable a user to manipulate the user interface to create a personalised data input and management solution. Indeed, most to-do apps and other management apps are one-dimensional, requiring users to either conform to the capability of the app or move on to something that better suits them.

Many users churn through these kinds of apps, only to end up frustrated with not finding one that entirely suits them while getting nickel-and-dimed along the way.

Bento for iPhone, however, borrows from the desktop version of the software. Among its features are 25 customisable templates. These include Issue Tracking, Time Billing, Customers, Expenses, Products for Sale, Inventory, Projects, Event Planning, Items Sold, and Equipment.

When demonstrating the app, Filemaker Asia-Pacific general manager Steve McManus said Bento for iPhone turns users into "pseudo app developers" by giving them the power to customise and adapt a Bento app database to their own liking.

Bento for iPhone is $5.99. You can use it independently of Bento for Mac (or Bento Desktop as it is now called after the latest free update) but having the computer version of Bento enhances the usability of the iPhone app, as some features on iPhone are limited.

Australian Macworld reviewer Anthony Caruana has already tried the app. Here's part of what he had to say:

"Rather than just provide syncing between your iPhone and a desktop installation of Bento, the iPhone app delivers almost all of Bento's power.

"Using one of the 25 supplied templates, you can build an application for a specific task on the fly. For $5.99, Bento has the potential to make redundant hundreds of other iPhone apps. Think of it - all those to-do lists, note managers, recipe books, log books and other flat databases that can now with Bento be developed and customised to suit your specific workflow and preferences without having to compromise over what some other developer thinks you need."

Anthony's full review has already been published online at www.macworld.com.au and will be re-printed in the July edition of *Australian Macworld*.

The Bento app for iPhone is now available at the iTunes store. — *Chris Oaten*

[MUG]

MUG activities: June

Mon 1
AMUG Sydney [NSW]
homepage.mac.com/sydamug
Southern Highlands Computer Users' Group [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au/
Gold Coast Macintosh User Group [QLD]
goldcoastmacusers.googlepages.com
Tue 2
MacTalk Hunter [NSW]
www.mactalkhunter.org.au
Wed 3
Toowoomba Apple & Mac User Group [QLD]
www.taamug.org.au
Thu 4
Hervey Bay Mac User Group [QLD]
www.hbmug.com
TasMac [TAS]
groups.yahoo.com/group/tasmug
Fri 5
SA Apple Users Club [SA]
www.saauc.org.au
Sat 6
AUSOM Incorporated [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au
Mon 8
Southern Highlands Computer Users' Group [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au
Tue 9
NQMUG [QLD]
www.nqmug.org
Macintosh Multimedia Group [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au & www.imug.com.au
Bellarine Mac User Group [VIC]
www.bellarinemac.org.au
ACT Apple Users Group Inc [ACT]
www.actapple.org.au
Wed 10
Bendigo Education Apple Users team [VIC]
web.me.com/jenashby/BEAUT/Welcome.html
Retirees and Others [VIC]
www.ausom.net.au
Club Mac [NSW]
www.clubmac.org.au
Coffs Harbour Mac User Group [NSW]
groups.yahoo.com/group coffs_mac_users
Sat 13
AMUG Sydney [NSW]
homepage.mac.com/sydamug
Sun 14
Gold Coast Apple Users Group [QLD]
goin.to/gcusers
Mon 15
Southern Highlands Computer Users' Group [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au
MUGSUNCO [QLD]
www.mugsunco.org.au
Tue 16
Byron Shire Mac User Group [NSW]
www.ozshop.net/bsmug
Sun 21
Apple-Q Inc [QLD]
www.apple-q.org.au
Mon 22
Southern Highlands Computer Users' Group [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au
Tue 23
internet macintosh user group [VIC]
www.imug.com.au
Thu 25
Central Victorian Macintosh Users Inc. [VIC]
www.cvmu.net
Sat 27
Geraldton Macintosh User Group [WA]
www.gmug.org.au
Mon 29
Southern Highlands Computer Users' Group [NSW]
www.shcug.org.au

— *List compiled by Nicholas Pyers*

Hotlinks

The Post Man is available on CD for $10 from participating Apple User Groups, including:

www.ausom.net.au/discofthemonth
AUSOM Incorporated
www.beaut.org.au/tips.html
BEAUT
www.bsmug.ozshop.net
Byron Shire Mac User Group
www.cvmu.net
Central Victorian Macintosh Users Inc
groups.yahoo.com/group/coffs_mac_users
Coffs Harbour Mac Users Group
goin.to/gcusers
Gold Coast Apple Users Group
www.mactalkhunter.org.au
MacTalk Hunter
www.saauc.org.au
South Australian Apple Users Club

Many User Groups allow you to purchase the Discs of the Month from their meetings - often at a discount; or to order via the web, postal mail, fax or telephone.

The Post Man

Apple's Mail is OK for managing the basics of email communication but when you're ready to step up, one of these apps will surely do the heavy lifting and ease the strain on your mail tasks.

Direct Mail: Powerful mailing list management and mail delivery software that lets you stay in touch with thousands of contacts. *Shareware*

DockStar: Add new badges to the Mail dock icon. *Demo*

Entourage Email Archive: Archive your email from within Microsoft Entourage. *Shareware*

eMail Verifier: eMail Verifier connects to SMTP servers to confirm if an email address is valid or not. *Shareware*

Eudora: Longstanding leader in industrial strength email software. *Sponsered & Light modes*

Eudora Mailbox Cleaner: A simple drag-n-drop application that helps you migrate mail and related data between different client programs. It preserves message status flags (read, replied) and reattaches attachments Eudora stripped from incoming messages. *Freeware*

Export Address Book: Export all the data in your Address Book into a data file. *Demo*

gMailContacts: Uploads your email addresses from Mac OS X Address Book to any gMail account. *Freeware*

JPEE Email Utility: A custom email merge, email extractor, email verifier, data parser and all in one affordable email utility. *Freeware*

MacFreePOPs: Many free email providers don't allow users to access their mailboxes with a traditional email client, but with MacFreePOPs you can. *Freeware*

Mail Forward: Allows you to forward mail from AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, MSN, Netscape, and Yahoo web mail accounts to any email address. Standard POP and IMAP email accounts can also be forwarded. *Shareware*

Mail Unread Menu: A simple menu bar application providing a quick and easy way to see how many unread email messages are in Apple's Mail. *Freeware*

Mail Appetizer: Plug-in for Apple's Mail that displays an onscreen notification window the instant a mail arrives. *Freeware*

Mail Act-On: Powerful enhancement to Apple's Mail Application that puts much-needed organisation options at your fingertips. *Shareware*

MailTags: Adds a convenient side panel in Apple's Mail to add tags, keywords, project, priority, notes to your messages. *Shareware*

MaxBulk Mailer: A full-featured bulk emailer and mail-merge tool that allows you to send out customised press releases, price lists and any kind of text or HTML documents to your customers. *Demo*

MiniMail: Just as the mini-player in iTunes does for music, this plug-in for Mail.app puts information about your inbox at your fingertips. *Shareware*

Personal Antispam: Analyses your incoming email, determining which messages are spam and which are valid messages. *Demo*

PowerMail: The consummate client for fetching, managing and searching email. *Shareware*

RelatedMessages: Builds an index, similar to Spotlight, of all your mail files, and uses that index to find messages related to the currently viewed message. *Freeware*

Thunderbird: Powerful email client from the same team that brought us FireFox. *Open Source*

TNEF's Enough: Allows Macs to read and extract files from Microsoft TNEF stream files aka "winmail.dat" files. *Freeware*

VacuumMail: An AppleScript application that performs the "vacuum" command on Apple Mail's underlying database to help speed up Mail and is designed to be incorporated into an automated maintenance routine and run at regular intervals. *Freeware*

WideMail: Customisable plugin for Apple Mail that provides wider columns in Mail's Windows. *Freeware*

Bonus Stationery for Leopard Mail

The Post Man CD has dozens of Mail Stationery Templates to enhance your Mail. The Celebration Galore Disc also has seasonal and festive Mail Stationery templates (plus a ton of clip art, fonts, music and sound effects).

— List compiled by Nicholas Pyers

You can link directly to software downloads for all of these titles via Nicholas Pyers' blog at www.macworld.com.au/blogs

Hotlinks

http://www.giantsquidfilms.com

Making the cut

If you're looking to break into the video industry you could do worse than emulating Sheldon Gillett's career trajectory. *Australian Macworld* completed this interview with Sheldon just after he'd touched down in Canada to shoot a music video. His critically acclaimed, feature music documentary *Water Street* was broadcast on CBC in Canada and led to productions with CBS News and the BBC. He's worked as a camera operator, sound recordist and editor on film, DV and HD productions. And he's an evangelist for Apple's Final Cut Pro.

We hear a lot about Final Cut Pro's dominance in the trailer production houses in LA, its popularity in Bollywood, and a growing user base, but how would you describe FCP's position in the Australian industry?

It seems everyone in Australia wants Final Cut Pro training these days. These folks represent the explosion of professional and DIY editors entering the marketplace thanks to affordable yet powerful, editing systems. You see FCP used for smaller marketing, online video and broadcast productions, while the post-house is still the domain of Avid and the choice for long format.

It's just been the past couple of years in the US that FCP has been more widely used for long format. You are seeing some converts acknowledging that FCP is growing up and willing to use it on bigger shows. The truth is, it does hold up on larger shows and you'll see it being embraced by more Australian post-shops.

Is there anything holding FCP back in the Australian market? What shortcomings might it have that turn decision-makers away from embracing it?

FCP is young, it's the challenger and there is still the perception that it's not industrial strength. For the first couple of versions, Final Cut suffered from poor media management, doggy asset sharing and weaker hardware. This gave it a reputation for not being able to handle feature films or big TV shows. This rep has stuck.

Apple has addressed these obvious shortcomings with much improved hardware, like the Xserve, and new software like Final Cut Server. I would imagine the major players in the Australian market are still hesitant to fully embrace FCP. There is a growing list of fix-its and desirable features for the next version (which is rumoured to appear this June at the WWDC), such as a total interface update – which hasn't changed much since 1.0. It also lacks features which other editing systems have enjoyed for years such as easy and accurate colour grading and a "script mode" for the video browser.

The guy who edits smaller projects at home should see greater freelance opportunity with more and more content being created for online delivery. As we've seen with laptops and mobile phones, Apple is serious about gaining market share. With the new version of FCP, perhaps they will be aiming more for the pro editing house.

A huge bonus is the love affair between Apple and RED (a maker of avant-garde high-def cameras). As more big players embrace the future and shoot on RED, they will also use FCP as the obvious choice for editing.

For people looking for a career in video editing and production, what would you recommend they do?

For an editor, you have to start collection credits for your resumé and also meeting people who are in production. Short formats such as music videos, corporate videos and short films are great opportunities to work with a variety of formats and provide material for your show reel. Beware, when starting out it's OK to work for cheap, but never pay to work.

Also seriously consider if editing is really what you want to do. It's an unhealthy, anti-social profession where you spend 12 hours a day sitting by yourself in a dark room with a face full of monitors. It'll take years before you make any real money and maybe you just wanted to be a set designer or grip after all.

Oh, and whatever job you do, know it inside out. If you're an FCP editor, there is no excuse not to be a master of the software. Think you're hot? Check out Apple's FCP Certification test.

Sheldon Gillett shares more of his industry expertise in an AMW podcast interview. Visit www.macworld.com.au/podcasts to download episode two of season two to hear it. The full transcript is also online in the Features section at www.macworld.com.au

Give your iPhone more than double the juice.

Finally, 1800 mAh in a pocket-size backup battery!

by Richard Thalheimer

Thinking of getting a backup battery for your iPhone or iPod?
The new RichardSolo 1800 has capacity and features that distinguish it from the competition.

Large 1800 mAh capacity will charge the iPhone completely to full, with more power left over for later charging.

Just snap it on — no cable required! Even fits with all cases.

110-240v AC wall charger included for fast charging. And, you can use the iPhone while charging it, and you can charge the RichardSolo 1800 and iPhone together at the same time, with the included USB cable, AC wall charger, or USB car charger — like getting two extra chargers for free! You can also use your Apple AC wall charger to charge both together.

The dual-port USB car charger will charge the RichardSolo 1800 and power another device. The RichardSolo 1800 also features a built-in laser pointer, and super bright LED flashlight, with lock button to prevent accidental use.

For iPhone, sturdy support brace holds iPhone and RichardSolo 1800 securely together. And, this is the only snap-on battery available with an actual iPhone latching mechanism, to keep the RichardSolo 1800 and iPhone firmly attached.

This polymerized lithium-ion battery takes hundreds and hundreds of charges. Three LED lights indicate charge status. The RichardSolo 1800 works with iPhone 2G/3G, and all iPod models except shuffle.

This is an extremely handy, pocket-sized solution to keep your iPhone or iPod going all day — and night! You will be absolutely delighted. That is my promise, and you can depend on it.

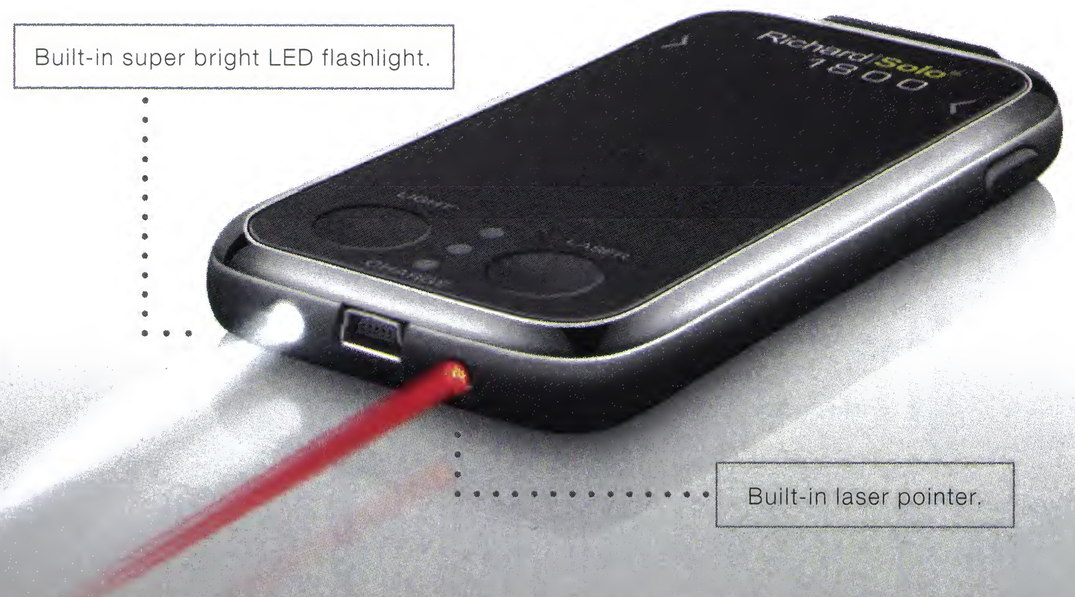
RS001 for iPhone/iPod **$99.95**

Order two, and save 15%

Hours of use may vary, depends upon many factors, including type of use, network, and connection speed. iPod is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. iPhone is a trademark of Apple Inc. Free items require purchase.

Made for iPod

Works with iPhone



FREE DUAL-PORT USB CAR CHARGER

BUILT-IN SUPER BRIGHT LED FLASHLIGHT

BUILT-IN LASER POINTER

FREE AC WALL CHARGER

iPhone 3G
8GB 16GB

iPhone
4GB 8GB 16GB

iPod touch
8GB 16GB 32GB

iPod nano
3rd generation (video)
4GB 8GB

iPod classic
80GB 160GB

iPod nano
2nd generation (aluminum)
2GB 4GB 8GB

iPod
5th generation (video)
30GB 60GB 80GB

iPod nano
1st generation
1GB 2GB 4GB

Richard|Solo®

USA on-line ordering and blog reviews
www.RichardSolo.com

UCC AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

For orders in Australia:
www.ucc-online.com.au/RichardSoloLaser
email: richardsolo@uccaustralia.com.au
phone: 02 9725 5354

⌘-1

Chris Oaten

SOUND DECISIONS

Mac fans and iPod and iPhone users are spoiled for choice when it comes to audio accessories. There seems no end of options. Chris Oaten picks out some of the best audio products on offer – from top shelf gear to top value offers.

Covering all the bases

Sony has been toasting my heart over the last year with some great releases – among them the A900 DSLR and the magnificent Bravia televisions – but the Giga Juke is a curious beast.

Is it an iPod dock? A network media centre? A micro hi-fi? Only one thing's for certain and that is it's hard to pigeonhole. There are no misgivings about its sound quality, though. I'm yet to hear Sony speakers that sound like they were built on the cheap and these speakers are no exception. Warm sound, lovely presence.

It has an 80GB hard drive on which to store audio files and, despite being a digital device, Sony put a nice, big volume knob on the front panel. I like that. Sometimes you just want to reach out and grab a chunky volume knob rather than fiddle about with a touch-sensitive slider on a remote control.

Sony has packed a lot of gadgety goodness in here. As with a filled-to-the-brim iPod classic, you could hit the play button and not hear the same song for days with the Giga Juke's ability to fit hundreds of hours of tracks on its drive. It can serve media files to remote locations around the home, too, so you can patch into songs stored on the drive from a compatible network device.

It also has a USB port so you can transfer music to a USB device. This is an appealing option for those who don't own an iPod.

Those who do own iPods may be surprised to learn they are not universally loved, yet this unit does have a "digital media port" through which an optional iPod dock can be attached (the TDMIP10, $149), taking the Giga Juke's versatility to another level.

It has an AM/FM tuner and a CD drive, and two clever jukebox modes - Party and x-DJ; the former conjures a party playlist from your tunes and the x-DJ creates a playlist of similar styles of tracks when you're in the mood for not-too-random random music.

Versatility and the ability to play any format from any popular device seemed to be the guiding principle in designing this device.

The only thing about the Giga Juke that irks me is navigating its menu structure. The top-level menus are easy enough to use, but I found that delving into settings options became too complex, which will translate to impenetrability for less technically inclined users.

For instance, trying to connect to my home Wi-Fi network. In the age of zero-configuration devices, this really shouldn't be difficult. Actually, it isn't especially difficult. Yet the Giga Juke manages to make it confusing, mixing an ancient menu structure with a confusing menu system. Yet there's an army of gadgeteers who like things this way. If you're one of those people who like being the master of your gizmo domain, the Giga Juke will suit you down to the ground.

But there's another reason to embrace the Giga Juke and one that I expect many may warm to and that is to utilise the Giga Juke as a music centre, leaving their Mac alone to be used for compute-only tasks.

Sony Giga Juke NASS55HDE, $1600

www.sony.com.au

Multimedia speaker

Editor's choice

Velvety bass, well balanced and separated tonal values, no distortion at maximum volume, a room-filling presence, and a remote control providing control over balance, bass and treble, subwoofer level and, of course, volume. Such sweet music to your ears.

Hang on… these speakers are billed as "multimedia" speakers. For gamers? That can't be right.

You know the Edifier S530 is set to deliver the goods when you unpack it. There's something about a heavy subwoofer unit with a protruding, 10-fin heatsink that says "play me loud, OK? I can take it".

And it sure can. Unlike many iPod docks, the Edifier doesn't automatically adjust an iPod's volume setting, or the volume level from a computer as audio source, which means you can "pre-amp" it by setting the source volume to maximum. Not that you should do this. If you do, clipping (peak levels losing their definition) will follow and the unit sounds fuzzy. Prolonged use in this manner will damage most speakers.

But it's good to know that if a family member does plug in their iPod to the Edifier and crank the iPod's volume up, it won't do any damage. The Edifier just shrugs it off while blasting some cracking sound.

Of course, sensible users - the kind who have Puccini or Rachmaninof ripped to their iTunes as CD-quality tracks – won't abuse their speakers this way. And while such audiophile users probably wouldn't choose these speakers for their lounge

room, they're sure to be satisfied with the bragging rights the Edifier would provide should it be afforded pride of place in a home office.

Any user will come to love the controller. A central wheel clicks through functions and scrolls to make adjustments, much like the old iPod click wheel.

Connecting my MacBook to these speakers and firing up Unreal Tournament 2004 revealed why these are packaged with "multimedia" on the front. With 35W through each satellite speaker and 75W of rumble through the subwoofer, you can feel the rocket launcher finding its target and the mini-gun rattles with a bone-shaking ferocity.

I have heard better 2.1 systems but they cost a lot more, so the Edifier is a gold label choice because on top all of the rich audio goodness, they're amazing value at the asking price. Available in black or white.

Er, do I really have to give these back?

Edifier S530 2.1 gaming speaker system, $400
www.edifier.com
Distributor: www.audion-mm.com

Express yourself

Altec Lansing's expressionist Bass and Classic models offer evidence the company isn't content to stand still in the design stakes.

The Bass model shows some crafty design ideas at work, with 100mm long-throw sub-woofers built into the bass of the conical speaker enclosures, which means the sub-bass is delivered at desk height, instead of from the sort of hefty unit that is usually floor-mounted, where the tactile sensation is soaked up by your ankles while the subbie gathers dust.

The expressionist Bass provides an especially pleasing low end and a dynamic one at that. As you move away from the speakers, you detect a shift in the bass end due to the long-throw design, suggesting that this would make a great speaker for both desktop use and in a lounge room setting.

Something to bear in mind is that because the sub-woofers point down from the bass of the enclosure, they transfer a lot of energy into whatever surface is supporting them. This means your choice of desk will influence the sound. Also, that if you have a lightly constructed desk, you will notice the vibrations when you rest your palms on the desk.

The expressionist Bass is definitely one for lovers of deep, throaty audio. Gamers using the Bass speakers would surely love the rumble effects in action games.

The Classic model delivers a far more subtle, delicate sound and is better suited to users after a gentle envelope to enjoy background music while they work at their computer. They also make quite a style statement with the square, speaker-mounted front plate forming the support for the speaker enclosure. However, as stylish as they are, they don't have much presence and would be lost in a large room. The Classic is definitely a speaker for a small office.

Specifications for the Bass are a 100mm (9W) subwoofer, plus 40mm full-range driver (3.5W), per channel, with

Off the Air

There are two compelling aspects to Altec Lansing's octiv Air. The first is the wireless iPod/iPhone dock. The second is that the unit comes with a bracket ready to mount on a wall. If you have limited space in your computer work area, home study, or however else you prefer to name your productivity space, being able to wall-mount a speaker is a very appealing option.

You can put the wireless docking station (that needs its own power supply but will charge your iPod) on your desk or, to save even more space, put it on a shelf and manage the speaker unit with a remote control.

On top of all that space-saving convenience, the speaker has an appealing, thumpy, room-filling sound that could do double duty as a party starter.

And when I say "thumpy" I'm not being entirely gratuitous. The speaker has a heavy bass end that can only be moderated using your iPod's EQ settings, which on the iPhone, is a bit of a pain. The heavy bass doesn't come at the expense of clear midtones and highs but could be better balanced. You may want to set your iPod to treble boost to even it out.

But I'm being a bit finicky, here, especially in light of the fact that wall-mounted speakers without a solid bass would sound reedy. If you like your music balanced towards the bottom end, you should find the octiv Air very appealing.

A word of advice. Don't miss the switch on the speaker base that optimises the sound balance for a wall-mounted or table position.

The octiv Air comes in two configurations. One as a single speaker, the other with two wireless speakers. The latter, considering the 30m-plus range between iPod dock and speaker, means you could fill a house with sound with the minimum of fuss.

Altec Lansing octiv Air, $799;
with a second speaker, $1099
www.alteclansing.com
Distributor: www.anyware.com.au

25W continuous power. The Classic comprises a single 75mm full-range speaker per channel (7.5W), with 15W continuous power.

Both units have dual 3.5mm audio-in jacks, one for a main source and another for an auxiliary device, such as an iPod.

Altec Lansing expressionist Bass, $240,
and expressionist Classic, $150
www.alteclansing.com
Distributor: www.anyware.com.au

Good, better, best

It seems as if these iPod docks from JBL have been around forever. Perhaps their engineers stick with that old maxim about things not being broken not needing fixing.

Each unit in the JBL trio here, pictured top to bottom, has a clearly targeted buyer.

The onstage IIIp is about portability. It will run off battery power (six AAs) or with a supplied 12v adaptor.

An iPod is the IIIp's natural partner, indeed the unit is beautifully sculpted around it, and there's a dock to accommodate it.

Alternatively, you can feed an auxiliary source with a 3.5mm jack on the rear of the base. And the IIIp has what I expect is an unintentional design bonus. The flat plate immediately behind where an iPod stands is the perfect place to drop your keys.

Picture this: You arrive home, dock your iPod for charging and listening and drop your keys in practically the same place. That's a habit I could get used to.

The 200iD brings alarm clock functionality to an iPod dock, along with AM/FM radio. Sure, there are plenty of these on the market but few sound as sweet as the 200iD. And you can't underestimate the value of that AM radio. I've lost count of the times I've been asked by people who like morning news radio which iPod dock has an AM channel.

And the last of the three, the 400iD, is packaged as a "high-performance" dock for iPod. And that, friends, is an honest label. Among the many speaker docks I've auditioned since 2007, the 400iD easily retains its top-five position. If you lust after the Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin but can't justify its price tag, the 400iD, at half the price, is a better than second-best option, although if you're shopping in this range the Bose and Altec Lansing docks are also worth a close look.

All of these JBL docks share one thing in common - terrific sound in a small form factor and, irrespective of their diminutive proportions, offer punchy audio.

Each of them produces a throaty low end and a suitably clean tonal range with pretty good separation across the range, except at high volume where the sound muddies a bit, but in a small enclosure that's hard to avoid.

The only complaint I would register is that because their driver arrays are contained within a single enclosure, the sound spread feels uni-directional. However, JBL engineers have done their best to enhance the stereo space to the point, I expect, that few buyers would ever be sorry they didn't buy a twin speaker set.

JBL on stage IIIP, $329
JBL on stage 200iD, $279
JBL on stage 400iD, $599
www.jbl.com
Distributor: www.conexus.com.au

Towers of power

These squarish cylinders with their piano black trim certainly look smart but their good looks are just the cream on top of a handsome package.

Sound-wise, Logitech's Z-5 would make a great choice for gamers cramped for space or unable to afford kit such as the Edifier 2.1 system or one of Logitech's excellent 5.1 systems. Speaking of which, I've found over the years that Logitech's 5.1 surround kits, such as the G-51, are of very good quality and offer a good price vs performance package. If you want surround sound, be sure to audition a Logitech system.

Back to the Z-5. With an omni-directional sound spread plus vented bass providing a nice low-end, these speakers fit well on the desktop but are easy enough to pick up and follow an audio source around the house.

They connect via USB to a computer or, with a 3.5mm jack, you can plug any audio feed into them. If you do, the external source overrides the USB audio source.

It makes for a versatile set of speakers but with USB providing the power, you're still tied to a laptop computer if you move rooms. However, it also means they're an excellent choice for sales execs, who often have trouble with good audio to support an AV presentation.

If I'm going to be picky, the Z-5 shines only with a quality audio source. MP3 tracks (at 128Kbps) sounded especially muddy but CD-quality tracks sounded way better. That comparison sounds obvious, I know, but the sound quality gap between the two sources is pronounced with these speakers.

Logitech Z-5, $199
www.logitech.com.au
Distributor: www.synnex.com.au

iPod dock

Editor's choice

When I first heard Bowers & Wilkins' Zeppelin iPod dock, I was absolutely captivated. Here was a product that not only looked different from everything else on the market, it was clearly engineered by a team that marches to the beat of a different drum.

What sets it apart – and it is immediately obvious to everyone but the tone deaf – is its extraordinary capacity for separating tonal values.

Full, rich bass, crystal-clear midtones and ringing highs are each accorded their own space. So many iPod speaker docks fail at this by muddying tonal values, usually in the mid range, but the Zeppelin sounds like it has a separate speaker for every instrument that was captured in the studio recording. Turn it up, as the Spinal Tap lads would say, to 11, and it manages to pump out a hefty but wholly pleasing sound without the faintest hint of distortion. I guess the engineers at B&W must like their music loud, too.

The Zeppelin houses 1 x 125mm bass (50w), 2 x 90mm midrange drivers (2 x 25W) and 2 x 25mm metal dome tweeters (2 x 25W). It comes with a remote control.

Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin, $1299
www.bowers-wilkins.com
Distributor: www.conexus.com.au

left: Verbatim USB speakers
right: Altec lansing orbit M

Going mobile

Quite honestly, you have to lower your expectations of good sound quality when you start looking at speakers packaged as portable audio and designed around a micro form factor.

Why? The combination of small form factor, the need to be lightweight, and invariably a low cost (because it's a product few consumers would invest heavily in) represents the antithesis of good speaker design principles.

Among the best I've heard, audio-wise, is the Altec Lansing orbit. This is a single speaker unit powered by three AAA batteries. It has a stowable (but at 20cm a rather short) cable to plug into a laptop or iPod headphone jack.

Amazingly, its 45mm speaker manages to produce an agreeable low end. I expect its funky design and ease of transport would make it a well-received gift for an iPod/iPhone-wielding teenager who likes to share their music with friends in impromptu situations.

If you want portable speakers with stereo spread, Altec Lansing's XT2 are probably worth a look (I haven't heard them, though) or you can go the cheap and cheerful route with Verbatim's USB speaker system.

Verbatim offers two models for toting with your laptop. Both are USB-powered. The smaller set I found just too tinny to bear but the appeal of the larger model sits in the same place as most other products in this space – that is, they're marginally better than your MacBook's speakers and can at least be spaced far apart to enhance stereo spread.

Altec Lansing orbit M, $53
www.alteclansing.com
Distributor: www.anyware.com
Verbatim (large) USB speakers, $51
www.verbatim.com.au

Hold the phone

Every time I see a new iHome product on a retailer's shelf I have to stop and look. The maker has what seems to be an obsession with new feature combinations.

Check this out. The iP47 features Bluetooth for auto pairing with mobile phones plus a speakerphone and mic with echo-cancellation for hands-free communications, an iPod dock, four speakers (two active, two passive) mounted atop a Reson8 sound chamber for richer bass, a dial pad, line-in jack for an auxiliary audio source, and alarm clock functions.

The sound quality is not impressive but agreeable for a small-form device. Where the iP47 shines is with its Bluetooth capability, which is great for hands-free calling. It supports HSP, HFP, A2DP and AVRCP Bluetooth profiles. Of these, the A2DP is significant as it supports streaming music over Bluetooth.

This will be more significant to iPhone users with the arrival of iPhone 3.0 (see page 21). As another measure of appeal to iPhone users, the iP47 won't force you to switch to airplane mode.

I can think of two scenarios where this device would be ideal. An addition to a bedside table is one, the other is in a home office where its owner spends a lot of time waiting on hold but also likes to have background music to work by. Certainly a useful unit for a particular kind of buyer. Pricey, though.

iHome iP47, $399
Distributor, www.conexus.com

PENTAGON Since 1982

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR SALE!

PENTAGON for the BEST RETURN ON YOUR I.T. INVESTMENT!

iMac Specials

All iMac Prices Reduced!

iMac 20" 2.66GHz - **$1940** (RRP $1999)

MS Office (Home) - **$205** (RRP $229)

APP - **$225** (RRP $268)

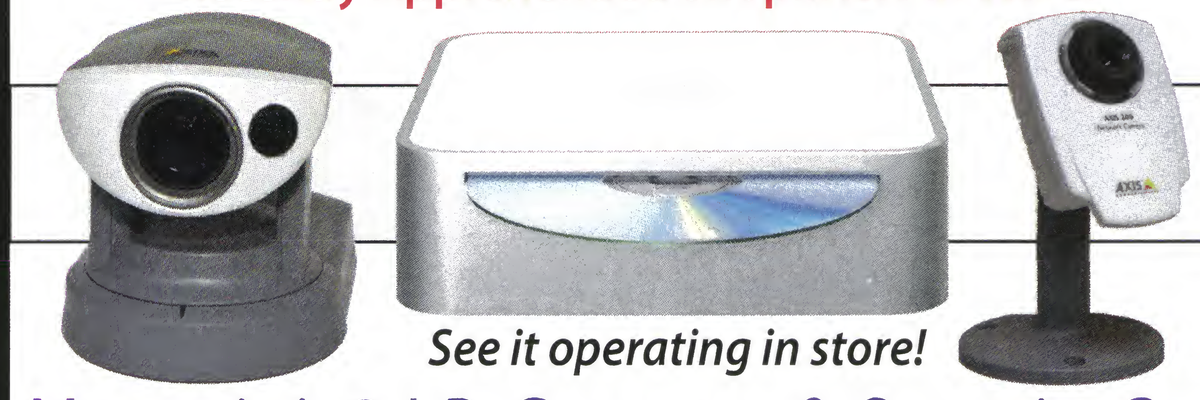
AppleCare
Protection Plan

SecurityCam

Security & Surveillance Solutions

Get an affordable security solution with our
I.P. cameras to secure your business, home and family.

Recently Apprehended Shoplifters in store!



See it operating in store!

Mac mini, 2 I.P. Cameras & SecurityCam software - **$2989**

MacBook & MacBook Pro Specials

All MacBook & MacBook Pro Prices Reduced!

$100 OFF 2GHz Aluminium Macbook - **$1999**

MacBook 13" 2.0GHz (White) - **$1589** SAVE $60

MacBook 13" 2.4GHz - **$2474** SAVE $75

MacBook Pro 15" 2.4GHz - **$3124** SAVE $75

MacBook Pro 15" 2.6GHz - **$3899** SAVE $100

MacBook Pro 17" 2.6GHz - **$4399** SAVE $100

APP for MacBook - $380 SAVE $100

Point of Sale Solutions!

Choose Single or Multi-user Version

POS•IM Point of Sale Solution software,
Cash Drawer, Barcode Scanner & Receipt Printer
gets you retailing in no time at all.

Mac Pro Specials

All Mac Pro & Monitors Reduced!

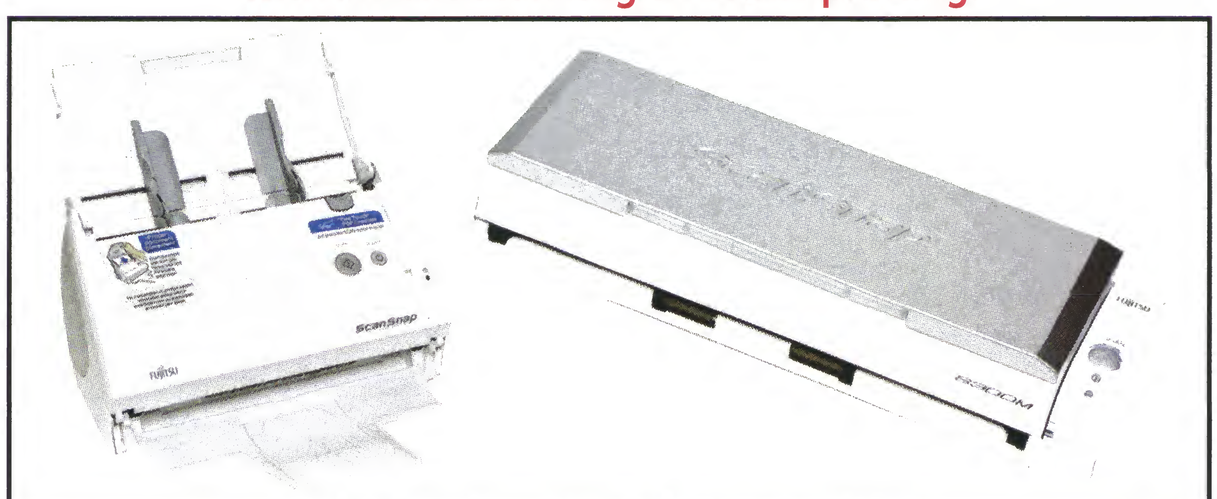
Mac Pro 2.66GHz QCX - **$4370** (RRP $4499)

Apple LED Cinema Display 24" - **$1470** (RRP $1499)

LET'S TALK BUSINESS: **0% Finance over 24months. 30% Investment Allowance available to Business Users.**

Document Management Solutions

with mobile scanning & mobile printing!



Includes Inverter for in-car use

Whether its digitizing those receipts, bank statements or papers at home or capturing critical documents on a business trip, get an affordable, mobile paperless office including scanner, printer and inverter from just **$989**

APPLE AUTHORISED SERVICE PROVIDER

SEE ONLINE FOR MORE PRODUCTS • ONSITE SERVICE & TRAINING AVAILABLE

SERVICE REPAIR CENTRE
MACS, iPODS & ALL APPLE PRODUCTS

PENTAGON digital

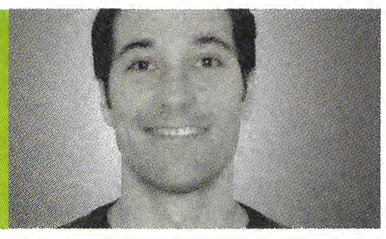
9896 1555

www.pentagon.net.au
sales@pentagon.net.au

Cnr Union & Whitehorse Rd
Mont Albert 3127
Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm
Sat 9am-5pm

Conditions apply to all deals/while stocks last

Premium Reseller



Danny Gorog
is wondering when Apple will expand its product line to include car stereos, white goods and TVs.

Codec confusion. Sorted.

If you're in the market for a new digital video camera, you might be a little confused. Not about which particular model to buy, but about the format that it records in.

In the old days (for the sake of this article, let's call it pre.264) the decision to buy a DV camera was a simple one. Nearly all of them had a Firewire output that any Mac with a Firewire input could easily import from. The Mac apps that imported video, including iMovie, iMovie HD, Final Cut Express and Final Cut all supported DV video. Life was simple. All you needed to worry about was choosing a brand of video camera with the right features — big zoom lens, battery life, and so on.

Just as DV was the prevailing standard for consumer-grade video cameras in the last decade, AVCHD, based on the H.264 codec, is the contemporary standard.

H.264 was introduced in Quicktime 7 and is a modern video compression standard that is based on, and is part of the MPEG-4 standard, but improves considerably on the quality of the video at the same bit-rate. So much so, that H.264 looks as good as an equivalent video encoded in MPEG-2 at up to half the bit rate. In technical speak, H.264 is known as MPEG-4 part 10.

It's important, however, not to confuse H.264 with Quicktime itself. The Quicktime .mov file format is structured as a "container"; it can hold a variety of media types such as audio, video, images and text, each stored as separate tracks. H.264 is just the latest video codec to be supported in Quicktime 7.

There are, of course, many other different file containers that exist out on the Internet. You've probably heard of a few of them: AVI (introduced by Microsoft), Matroska (or MKV) and MP4.

According to the Wikipedia entry on H.264, a goal for the designers of H.264 "was to provide enough flexibility to allow the standard to be applied to a wide variety of applications on a wide variety of networks and systems, including low and high bit rates, low and high-resolution video, broadcast, DVD storage, RTP/IP packet networks, and ITU-T multimedia telephony system". Or, simply, one format that plays on all devices.

H.264 was the logical choice for Apple to use across its platform (in fact, Apple helped develop it). It's good enough for HD content, it scales well so suits both the 3.5in iPhone and iPod Touch display, and works on other iPods that support video, too. All videos you buy from the iTunes store are encoded with H.264 (but with some added DRM, for good measure).

Because H.264 is a standard rather than a format it supports a family of standards or profiles. As you've come to expect from anything digital, to interpret or decode an H.264 profile you need a specific decoder. Particular decoders exist for each profile, but unfortunately there's no one decoder that can decode every profile.

The profiles in H.264 also mean that the implementation of AVCHD varies by manufacturer. Canon and Panasonic camcorders use High-Profile Level-4.1, while Sony Handycams use Main-Profile Level-4.0. The High-Profile mode of H.264 is more difficult to create and play back than Main-Profile and, consequently, recordings made on a Panasonic camcorder can't be watched or edited on a Sony and vice-versa.

Do you miss the good old days of DV yet? Many do.

The upshot is simple. If you are buying an AVCHD video camera, make sure it's Mac-compatible. If you can't find that information on the product box or website, assume it's not.

If you want to double check, Apple maintains a comprehensive page listing camera compatibility here: support.apple.com/kb/HT3290

It also pays to do some research about a camera you're interested in. Google is your best friend. Search on the model number and "review" for an assessment.

The good news is that if you buy an AVCHD video camera, chances are that it'll work with your Mac. But many consumers are now opting for cheaper video cameras (like the Flip) or using their point-and-shoot digital cameras to capture videos. Again, in many cases, video taken from these devices will work on your Mac but it pays to check with the manufacturer before plonking down your hard-earned.

In the example of the The Flip, you'll need a special program called FlipShare that lets you access the videos on your Flip, and export them to other programs such as iMovie and iPhoto. Programs like FlipShare are called transcoders — they take code from one format and change it to another.

If your particular camera didn't come with special Mac software you still have some options. Low-cost (and in some cases, free) programs such as RoadMovie or Handbrake can help you convert your movies to iMovie-compatible files but conversion can be slow.

If you're looking for a faster way to convert clips, a small USB stick called the turbo.264 HD from Elgato makes easy work of converting any movie file to something that's Mac compatible. (A full review is on page 71.) You can also use turbo.264 HD to open and convert raw AVCHD files; particularly useful if you've got an older Mac that you want to view and edit AVCHD files on.

Unfortunately, the future of video codecs and H.264 is anything but clear, but one thing you can be confident of is if your movie file ends up in a format that Apple's iApps opens, then you'll be as future-proofed as you can be.

⌘-2

ARC OF OUR COVENANT

Observant readers would know this mouse forms a monthly prize in *Australian Macworld*. Here's a little more about what our lucky prize winners enjoy.

The award-winning Arc Mouse fuses fashion and functionality with its sleek, collapsible design that folds the mouse almost in half, providing the comfort of a full-size mouse with the portability of a notebook mouse.

Flipping the mouse shut automatically turns the power off to save battery life. The Arc Mouse also features a snap-in, magnetic micro-transceiver that effortlessly snaps into the bottom of the mouse, making packing up easier than ever.

Microsoft Arc mouse
RRP: $99.95
Microsoft Australia
www.microsoft.com.au
13 20 58

SHINE A LITTLE LIGHT

Our favourite vendors of crazy USB gadgets, Brando, has a stylish little number here with a USB-powered light. The light comprises three LEDs, sufficient to keep your immediate area sufficiently illuminated that you don't knock over that glass of shiraz in the dark. With a flexible metal gooseneck and standing 35cm tall, this is an energy-efficient way to shed a little light on your workspace.

USB mini desktop light
RRP: About $23, plus shipping
Brando
http://usb.brando.com.hk

BIG SOUND, SMALL PACKAGE

We tried hard to get a set of these little wonders for this month's audio guide but with B&O it's a matter of you come to us, not us to you. Sigh. We can be reasonably certain, however, that they are great little performers, if Bang and Olufsen's reputation is anything to go by. The BeoLab 3 active 250W speakers feature a unique acoustic lens technology, which provides optimum sound quality irrespective of placement. Apparently, the acoustic lens also limits sound reflections from floor and ceiling for a precise sound experience.

BeoLab 3
RRP: $5990 plus stands
Bang & Olufsen
www.bang-olufsen.com

⌘-2

GADGET CENTRAL

Gear, gizmos and goodies for your Mac or iPhone

JUST THE RIGHT TOUCH

Already the leading name in pen tablets, if not the only name in pen tablets, Wacom's new Intuos4 device takes pen input to new levels.

Actually, with 2048 levels of pressure for the lightest to the heaviest of pen stroke techniques, the new tablet brings new responsiveness to emulating natural media.

Specific workflow and productivity tools in the Intuos4 include shortcut and modifier keys with multiple customisable and application-specific profiles as well as OLED displays located beside the keys for quick reference and to remind of the current function of each ExpressKey.

Also new to the Intuos4 is the user-defined Touch Ring. A button located in the centre of the ring "toggles" the ring between functions such as zoom, scroll, brush size adjustment, canvas rotation, and layer selection.

Capable of controlling up to four different functions in any application, the Touch Ring features an LED located along the perimeter to indicate the current function.

There are too many features to list here. Check out the review on page 63.

Wacom Intuous4 pen tablet
RRP: Small, $378; Medium, $598; Large, $798; and Extra Large, $1328.
Wacom Australia
www.wacom.com.au

LUMIX LARGE ON THE HORIZON

Panasonic recently announced the much-anticipated Lumix DMC-GH1 Creative HD Hybrid. This is the latest member of the LUMIX G Micro System of new generation interchangeable lens system cameras.

Fully compliant with the Micro Four Thirds System standard, the LUMIX DMC-GH1 is an advanced photographic tool that records not only high-quality photos but also High Definition (HD) 1080/25p or smooth 720/50p HD movies in AVCHD format

Lumix DMC-GH1
RRP: $1999 (with 14-140mm lens)
Panasonic Australia
www.panasonic.com.au

CLASSIC APPEAL

If you are looking for a simple and affordable laptop case that offers superior protection for your laptop, the Targus Classic Laptop Case is up to the task.

The protective padded section within the case prevents scratching and damage of your laptop, while the inbuilt pockets help keep belongings organised. The Classic is available in three different sizes. The range can fit laptops measuring up to 12in, 13.3in or 15.6in.

Targus Classic Laptop Bag
RRP: $49.95
Targus
www.targus.com.au
1800 641 645

IMMERSIVE CANS

Sure, they look good but how good are they? Well… Logitech's G35 Surround Sound Headset was awarded the CES 2009 Design and Engineering Award: Honouree in Electronic Gaming. Convinced? For game-changing immersion, the G35 is the first Logitech headset to offer 7.1 surround sound - a perfect complement to the growing number of action games and high-definition movies that support 7.1-channel surround sound. This is one for the dual-booters. The headphones are only supported in Windows.

Logitech G35 Surround Sound Headset
RRP: $199.95
Logitech
www.logitech.com
www.anyware.com.au

PLAY IN COLOUR

Boston acoustics®

Solo

Designed to look great and sound even better.

- High Performance AM/FM Radio with presets
- Dual Alarm clock with Sleep timer
- Auxiliary Input for iPod
- 9 Optional Grille Colours
- Available in Black or White

"...we find ourselves enamoured of this Boston Acoustics Solo..." *What HiFi*

$299 RRP

DUO-i

★★★★½
PC Advisor

The versatile DUOi offers big system sound that fi ts virtually any room.

- High Performance AM/FM Radio with presets
- Dual Alarm clock with Sleep timer
- Built in iPod Dock
- Remote control
- Video out for iPod
- 9 Optional Grille Colours
- Available in Black or White

"...consider splurging on the DUOi. It's worth it." *Macworld*

$499 RRP

IDS-2

From your iPod to everyone's ears - realistic, room filling stereo sound with clean, powerful bass.

- 60 watts power • Remote control
- Built in iPod Dock • USB connector
- Works with most iPods inc. iPhone
- Video out for iPod
- 9 Optional Grille Colours
- Available in Black or White

"...should be on your shortlist of options" *iLounge*

$349 RRP

HFVM
HI FI & VIDEO MARKETING

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED IN AUSTRALIA BY HI FI & VIDEO MARKETING PTY LTD

Please contact us on (02) 9319 6877 for your nearest stockist.

Email: info@hifivideomarketing.com.au www.hifivideomarketing.com.au

PUSHING THE GREENER SCREENER

Sony recently announced a slew of new TVs including the WE-series 1080p LCDs, which feature new energy-saving technology to reduce power consumption. Among these features is the world's first micro-tubular HCFL backlight panel, which uses up to 40 per cent less energy when users are watching TV; a Presence Sensor that can tell when a viewer has left the room and automatically turns the TV picture off, but leaves the sound on, and if the viewer re-enters the room, the Presence Sensor automatically switches the TV picture back on. The Presence Sensor can also be set to switch off the picture after a certain period of time. There is also an Energy Saving Switch in the BRAVIA WE5 that allows you to shut off the TV's power almost completely, without having to unplug the AC cord from the mains. This cuts standby mode power consumption to less than 0.0001W.

Sony Bravia WE-series LCD TVs
RRP: 40in, $3199
RRP: 46in, $3799
Sony Australia
www.sony.com.au

HARDEN UP

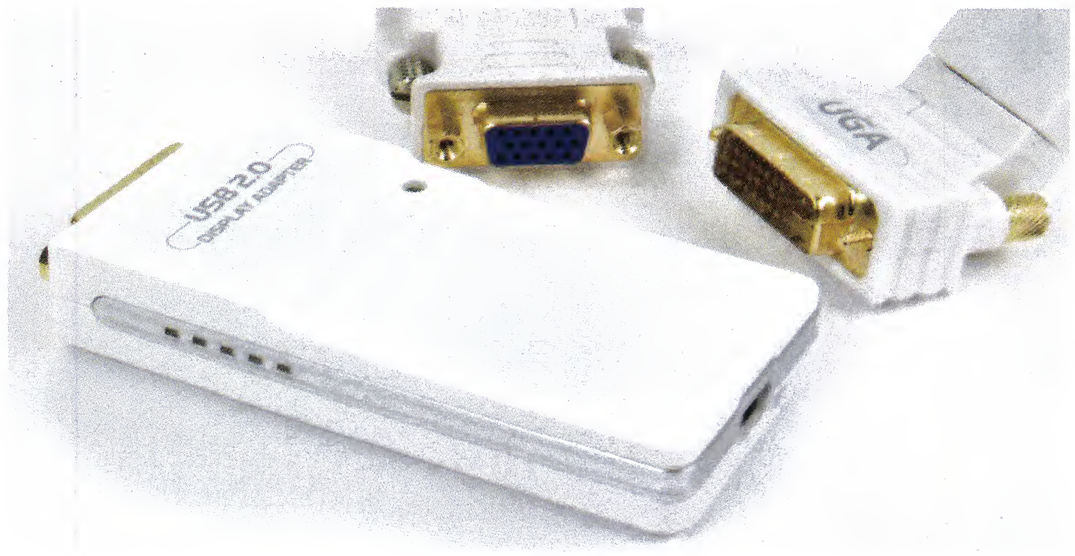
In the same way that a turtle uses its shell as protection from predators, your laptop needs a hard shell layer to guard it in every day life. STM's Turtle is a rugged, protective sleeve made from compressed EVA, which creates a firm sheath that covers your laptop and keeps it safe from the bumps and scratches it comes across on a day to day basis. The 600D jacquard fabric provides a texture that serves a dual purpose- it's easy to grip on to and looks classy and professional in any situation. Available in two sizes to fit most laptops with screens up to 13in and 15in.

STM Turtle laptop cover
RRP: $69.95
STM Australia
www.stmbags.com.au
(02) 8338 0222

ADAPT OR BE LEFT BEHIND

Other World Computing has advised the new OWC USB 2.0 Display Adaptor, the easiest way to add an additional display to Macs via any standard USB 2.0 port, is now available. Functioning like a bus-powered external video card, the adaptor adds an additional monitor to desktop and laptop computers that offer only one built-in display/video-out port. The adaptor also eliminates the cost and hassle of installing a video card into a computer.

OWC USB 2.0 Display Adaptor
RRP: $99US
Other World Computing
www.macsales.com



PUMP UP YOUR TIVO

Expanding consumers' TV recording capabilities by hundreds of hours is Western Digital's new 1TB capacity My DVR Expander. TiVo users can now instantly and seamlessly expand their TiVo recording capacity by simply attaching the DVR Expander to their TiVo device. Verified as compatible with all Australian TiVo media devices, the My DVR Expander enables recording of up to 400 hours of digital standard definition or 200 hours of high-definition television programming in addition to the native 160GB capacity of TiVo.

Western Digital
DVR Expander
RRP: $299
Western Digital
www.wd.com.au
1300 100 100

TUNE INTO MAC TV

Enjoy watching and recording digital TV on your computer or notebook with AVLabs' newly released AVL683 Digital TV Tuner. PC and Mac users can now use the portable TV tuner to extend the capabilities of their computers, transforming them into personal TVs and video recorders - with remote control.

With the AVL683, you can watch and record high definition TV anywhere in Australia with digital reception. Complete with Arcsoft Total Media for PC and Equinux's The Tube for Mac users, the provided software allows you to take control of your TV viewing with the Time-Shifting function, enabling you to pause, rewind and replay your favourite TV moments.

The AVLabs USB Digital TV Tuner
RRP: $149.95
Audion Innovision
www.audion-mm.com
1300 300 364

DOCK OF THE DAY

Here's one that missed our audio round-up (beginning page 30), but we couldn't let it slip by unnoticed because it's a little beauty. Offering a deep, satisfying bass and pleasing tonal range in a 20W driver array with vented bass, the SRS-GU10iP should be on your shopping list if it's a compact shelf-top iPod dock you're looking for. A remote control and a bass booster round out the features. If you like your music with some thump but have limited space, this is a good choice.

Sony SRS-GU10iP Active Speaker System
RRP: $289
Sony Australia
www.sony.com.au
1300 13 7669

Martin Levins
likes empowering people to create using computing technologies

Too cool for school

For quite some time now, Mac users in education have felt marginalised by education authorities that have effectively limited the choice of computer that can be used in their classrooms.

This limitation has taken different forms in each state, but has common elements: mandating administration software that has no Mac client using Microsoft's corruption of the Java standard in departmental web servers so that only Internet Explorer would work; providing "incentives" for principals to change existing Macs for Windows machines; ignoring Apple's offer of volume licensing of the Operating System and iLife, then blaming them for high software pricing — the list goes on.

Not only does it go on, but the stories heard from those in the know would give conspiracy theorists enough fodder for a bibliothèque of books, a marathon of movies.

The reasons for such behaviour are manifold, ranging from the "need" for centralised management and control to the bizarre desire that "no Australian child will live without experiencing Word", but the real reason, I suspect, is cost: "Why buy a $1200 computer when a $500 machine will do the job?"

We've all heard this mantra, after which I normally ask: "Do what?" Does the measure of success for this investment boil down to how many machines we have? Is technology use by schools merely a tourist attraction where proud principals can point to more and more glowing screens? Don't we need to question what the machines will do to enhance learning?

Educationalists haven't helped here, with their seemingly singular pursuit of the hype of Web 2 technologies and Apple itself hasn't aided either. If we look at their Professional Learning offerings over the last few years, we see the same "we can do Web 2" exclamations, often at the exclusion of iLife, which is their core offering and one of the points of difference that Apple has to offer over their opposition.

If all you are going to do is wikis and blogs, then why would you spend that $1200 when a $500 netbook PC will achieve the same output? Even Apple's own offering in Leopard Collaborative services has languished for nearly two years, rarely being promoted as an alternative to the hundreds of schools whose management entities prevent access to external Web 2 services, yet have Leopard servers on their networks.

The included iLife suite, its incredibly low cost volume licensing for schools, and the power and simplicity of their servers are clear points of difference that are important in markets because they drive purchasing decisions. If there are no points of difference, then the product becomes an indistinguishable commodity and price becomes very elastic: the sole determinant for purchase of the product.

And so, we come to the NSW Department of Education and Training decision to adopt the Lenovo IdeaPad S10e: over 220 000 of them for students and staff at their schools.

The Lenovo unit itself is quite light and includes an Express slot and built-in card reader, but it suffers with very small screen viewing angles (lousy for sharing in a learning situation), very basic graphics, basic "g" wireless networking rather than the newer "n" standard which has much higher speed, and is hobbled with the ages-old Windows XP, although NSW DET has announced they will update to Windows 7 when it becomes available. Battery life is unspecified — hopefully they will come with the 6-cell battery as the 3-cell won't last much more than two hours with active wireless networking.

Included is Microsoft's Office and a version of Adobe's Creative suite, both highlighted by NSW Premier Nathan Rees in his press release, but is the machine really suitable for content creation using these applications?

Let's look at Intel's own web pages on the Atom processor in these new machines (see Hot Links):

"Looking for more features? If multitasking is important to you, or watching Blu-ray discs, or doing your own video editing, or running intensive office operations — check out the power of an Intel Centrino 2 processor-based full-featured notebook."

Good luck running all that stuff from Adobe or "intensive office operations" which work best when multitasking.

The pedestrian Windows laptop has become the Volkswagen. It's all you need, Macs are considered "too cool".

Microsoft itself is pushing this approach after a series of advertisements in 2008 specifically to counter the success of the "I'm a Mac, I'm a PC" ads run by Apple, which enjoyed a subsequent increase in market share.

At first, there was a series of surreal ads featuring a Jerry Seinfeld/Bill Gates duo, (which made as much sense as an eggplant riding a skateboard) and the "I'm a PC" knock-offs, the basis of the new Microsoft anti-Mac ads is "take $1000 and buy yourself a laptop".

"I guess I'm too cool to own a Mac" laments Lauren, the actor who ends up with an HP laptop after looking at a Mac.

Who cares? As long as the machines are cheap and centrally managed — that's more important than creativity I guess.

Hotlinks

tr.im/mgIAtom
Looking to do multimedia in NSW schools? Sorry.
tr.im/mgIMSad
Parody of Microsoft's $1000 laptop challenge ads

COMBO SAVER

FOR A LIMITED TIME
SAVE UP TO
$2500!

2 YEAR WARRANTIES

Until 30/6/2009 save up to $2500 on a packaged Primera CD/DVD/BD Autoprinter and an evocept Duplication Tower with extras!

COMBO SAVER II:
1x Primera Bravo II Autoprinter ($2799 RRP)
with 2nd Year Extended Warranty ($419 RRP)
1x evocept CopyBlast 7 Drive 20x DVD ($999 RRP)
with 2nd Year Extended Warranty ($239 RRP)
100x Verbatim AquaAce DVD-R* ($160 RRP)
TOTAL VALUE = $4616
PROMOTIONAL PRICE = $2799

COMBO SAVER PRO: (AS ABOVE)
1x Primera BravoPro Autoprinter ($4099 RRP)
with 2nd Year Extended Warranty ($619 RRP)
1x evocept CopyBlast 11 Drive 20x DVD ($1399 RRP)
with 2nd Year Extended Warranty ($339 RRP)
100x Verbatim AquaAce DVD-R* ($160 RRP)
TOTAL VALUE = $6616
PROMOTIONAL PRICE = $4099

ON2DVD®
CAPTURE • EDIT • AUTHOR • BURN!

Visit on2dvd.com.au or FREECALL 1800 ON2DVD

Don't forget the 30% tax deduction for eligable businesses. See your tax advisor or www.ato.gov.au for more information

⌘-3

Christopher Breen

Hotlinks

http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3290
Apple's iMovie '09 support page
www.shedworx.com/voltaichd
Tool for converting AVCHD for use on older Macs
www.roxio.com/enu/products/toast/default.html
Roxio Toast Titanium 10 also converts AVCHD
http://handbrake.fr/
Handbrake, a free transcoding tool

HIGH DEFINITION. HIGHLY DEFINED.

Everything you need to know about HD camcorders but were too busy to ask. Camera types, features, archiving…

A walk through today's electronics emporiums, hotel rooms and sports bars, as well as through a vast number of living rooms, reveals that we're well on our way to reflecting reality in high definition. Broadcast television is going completely digital; HD movie downloads are becoming more common and the large, analog cathode-ray tube TVs of old are about as relevant as the Model T. Given our increasingly high-def landscape, is it time to consider an HD camcorder?

In a word, yes. Prices for these camcorders have dropped precipitously - you can now put HD in your pocket for less than $200. Recent Macs have enough horsepower to edit the huge files these cameras can generate. And with each passing day, it's easier to share the results of your work - in much of its HD glory - with the rest of the world.

In the following pages, we'll explore the features and functions of modern HD camcorders, the ins and outs of importing and editing HD video, and how to deliver the goods once you've finished editing your work.

CAMCORDERS 101

Now that we've convinced you to explore high-definition video, let's discuss what makes up the modern HD camcorder.

Features and functions. All HD camcorders have a lens, a sensor that captures video and converts it to digital information, an LCD that displays video, a storage medium, and a way to move video from the camcorder to a computer. But there's variety in these elements, as well as in the resolutions and frame rates the camcorders can capture video in. Also, some models offer extra features that you might want to consider. Those elements and extras shake out this way.

Lens. Full-size camcorders (as opposed to pocket camcorders such as the Flip MinoHD) have lenses with optical zoom - the kind of zoom controlled by movement of the lens elements. All today's full-size consumer camcorders have at least a 10x optical zoom. The image you get from an optical zoom is as crisp and clear as the lens can make it. In addition to optical zoom, these camcorders offer digital zoom that extends the reach of the optical zoom. (You could, for example, have a camcorder with a 15x optical zoom and a 180x digital zoom.)

Digital zoom enlarges the image by making pixels larger, which leads to softer video (similar to scaling up an image in Adobe Photoshop).

Sensor. At one time, digital camcorders contained CCD (charge-coupled device) sensors - imaging sensors that work in tandem with a separate processor to convert images to digital information. Most of today's camcorders use CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor) sensors. CMOS chips are less expensive, require less power, and can be made smaller than CCD chips.

A sensor's size and makeup can make a difference to your video. The larger a sensor is, the better its low-light performance is likely to be (so you'll see less noise in video captured in low-light conditions). Also, the more pixel elements a sensor has (and the larger they are), the sharper the image usually is.

LCD. Many modern full-size camcorders sport touch-screen LCDs you use not only to view your video but also to access a camcorder's many recording and playback features. (Pocket camcorders have far smaller displays, and they have buttons rather than touch-screen controls.) On some camcorders, the LCD also acts as the sole viewfinder.

Storage. Most full-size camcorders provide either tape-based or tapeless storage. And the way a camera stores its data hints at the kind of video format it uses.

Although tape is on its way out as a storage medium in HD camcorders, manufacturers including Canon, Sony, and JVC still make some tape-based cameras. These cameras shoot in the HDV (high-definition video) format, which uses the MPEG-2 compression codec, and they usually record onto standard MiniDV tapes.

Video from HDV camcorders looks great, and tapes can be convenient for archival purposes. The disadvantages of tape are that your shooting time is limited. A tape holds an hour of video and unlike tapeless camcorders, you don't have instant access to individual clips. Instead, you have to wind through the tape to find the clip you want. Also, you have to capture footage from the tape in real time. If you shoot for an hour, it will take at least an hour to transfer all the footage to your computer.

Tapeless camcorders store their data on hard drives, flash memory chips, MiniDVD discs, or removable memory cards (and some cameras use multiple media). These cameras use the AVCHD (Advanced Video Codec High Definition) format - a high-definition format that uses the MPEG-4 AVC/H.264 codec.

When you import these AVCHD files into iMovie '09 (or Final Cut Express or iMovie '08, if you prefer) they are converted to the Apple Intermediate Codec (AIC) because iMovie can't work natively with AVCHD footage. This conversion causes the file size to balloon considerably - a 150MB AVCHD 1080i file converted to AIC weighs in at about 1.1GB.

These AIC files consume a lot of storage space on your Mac, and editing them requires a fair amount of processing power. You need an Intel-based Core Duo processor or better. With the help of a video conversion utility, you

Zoom In. The JVC Everio GZ-HM200 offers a 20x optical zoom, along with a splash of colour and the ability to record consecutively on two SDHC cards.

⌘-3

1080p. The Canon HF11 offers "true high definition" recording with its 1080p capture.

can convert AVCHD to a file format other than AIC, and you may be able to work with that converted file on a PowerPC Mac or a slower Intel Mac (we'll have more on this later).

Camcorders that house a hard drive tend to be more expensive and bulkier than those that store data on flash media or media cards.

The advantage of a camcorder with a 60GB or larger hard drive is that it can record for long periods of time. For example, if you're shooting a day's worth of presentations and don't want to miss a second to swap in new media, an AVCHD camcorder with a hard drive is a good choice.

The disadvantage is that when the drive gets full, and if the camcorder doesn't offer another storage option (a media card, for instance), you must either delete some of the data on the drive or connect the camcorder to a computer and archive the video, which can take time that you may not have to spare.

Pocket camcorders act like USB key drives - connect one to your Mac and it will appear on the desktop as a removable hard drive. These cameras store video either as H.264 MPEG-4 files (for instance, the Flip MinoHD) or H.264 AVI files (the Creative Labs Vado HD).

Resolution and frame rate. When looking at HD camcorders, you'll see a variety of numbers followed by an i or a p such as 1080i and 720p. These figures indicate the HD video mode: the number of horizontal pixels and the display format. Specifically, 1080 video offers a resolution of 1920 (vertical) by 1080 (horizontal) pixels; 720 video offers 1280 (vertical) by 720 (horizontal) pixels.

The i and p stand for interlaced and progressive. Traditional video is made up of odd and even lines (or fields). With interlaced video, each video frame is displayed in alternate fields, horizontal lines that are painted on the screen from top to bottom. So in the case of 1080i, the 540 odd fields of one-pixel rows are displayed first, followed by the 540 even rows. Progressive video (often called Full High Definition Video by manufacturers) draws every line, from top to bottom, in one pass.

The goal is to produce 25 frames per second (or darned close to it). Camcorders that shoot 1080i do this by shooting 50 interlaced, odd and even frames per second. This is termed 50i. 1080p camcorders shoot 25 (25p) progressive frames per second.

Some camcorders can optionally shoot 24p video - 24 frames of progressive video per second. Because 24fps is the standard used in motion pictures, shooting at this rate on a camcorder gives the video a more cinematic look. And because the shutter speed is lower (so more light can touch the sensor), 24p also gives you better low-light video. Additionally, video shot at 24p contains fewer frames and therefore consumes less storage space.

Progressive video looks cleaner than interlaced video, particularly when there's a lot of movement in the image. You're less likely to notice the difference between interlaced and progressive video on a television because TVs are designed to account for interlaced video - they either support interlacing natively (standard-definition TVs) or include deinterlacing circuitry (HDTVs) that converts interlaced video to progressive video. Computer monitors, which are progressive-scan devices, don't include deinterlacing, which is why interlaced video can look jagged on them.

For this reason, it's important to consider where your video will eventually appear. If that's a TV, either interlaced or progressive video will do. If your video is likelier to appear on computer screens, progressive is the better choice.

Mid-priced full-size camcorders typically shoot in 1080i, whereas more-expensive camcorders offer 1080p video (and some offer additional shooting modes such as 24p). Pocket camcorders, however, shoot only in standard definition or 720p.

Stability. Most HD camcorders, including Panasonic's HDC-HS100, use optical image stabilisation to reduce the shakiness of handheld video.

Bit rate. This term describes the amount of information stored in a unit of time. For example, HDV, which uses the MPEG-2 encoder, offers a maximum bit rate of 25 Mbps (megabits, or millions of bits, per second). AVCHD, which uses the H.264 encoder, maxes out at 24 Mbps. The higher the bit rate, the better the video should look.

You can't compare the bit rates of different encoders, as each encoder has its own way of processing video. For example, H.264 is a more efficient encoder than MPEG-2, so it produces better-looking video at lower bit rates. When comparing camcorders, you can compare the bit rates of two AVCHD camcorders, for instance, but not of an AVCHD and an HDV camcorder.

Media transfer. Today's camcorders routinely transfer data via a USB 2.0 connection. This is good news for people with one of the most recent MacBook models, which lack a FireWire port. Unlike full-size camcorders, which include mini-USB ports, pocket camcorders have full-size USB connectors. A push of a button usually releases the connector so it's ready to plug into a USB 2.0 port. For cameras that use removable media - an SD card, for example - you can optionally eject the media from the camera and plug it into a card reader.

Inputs and outputs. In addition to a USB port, HD camcorders can include a variety of other ports for moving audio and video in and out of the camera. Mini-HDMI ports for connecting the camera to an HDTV or an HD receiver are commonly found on full-size HD camcorders. You might also find an AV-out port that lets you send component analogue video to an analogue device such as a TV set, a video recorder, or a video-capture card. Many full-size camcorders also include microphone and headphone ports.

Image stabilisation. Even if you're not loaded up on caffeine, your hands are going to shake when holding a camcorder. To take the resulting shake out of a camcorder's video, manufacturers include image-stabilisation technology in their full-size camcorders. It can't do much for wild movements, so it's no substitute for a tripod but it will smooth out the mild shake you commonly get when holding a camera. When you zoom in all the way, image stabilisation makes it easier to frame your shot and hold it steady. Pocket camcorders don't include image stabilisation, so the video they capture is likely to be shaky unless you use a tripod or have unearthly muscle control. (As with zoom, optical stabilisation is preferable to digital stabilisation.)

Still capture. Full-size camcorders can also take still images, just like a digital still camera (some can do this while you're shooting). Cameras will rate their still image capabilities by the number of megapixels captured - 3.0-megapixels, for example. While having the ability to capture still images is nice, it's not these cameras' strongest feature and therefore shouldn't be a major factor in your buying decision. Most of today's point-and-shoot cameras will produce better-looking pictures than a camcorder (and camcorders usually produce better looking videos than still cameras with video functionality).

Manual control. While camcorders are normally operated as point-and-shoot devices, there will be times when you want greater control over exposure and focus - for example, if you're shooting on a bright sunny day and want the camera to compensate with a more sympathetic white balance, or if you're shooting in low light and the camera's autofocus doesn't track your subject as well as you'd like. The ability to select a white-balance setting, adjust exposure, and manually control focus is handy. The more expensive a full-size camcorder is, the greater manual control you're likely to get. Pocket camcorders truly are point-and-shoot and offer no exposure or focus controls.

Cameras that double as HD camcorders

If you're serious about video, an HD camcorder is the only way to go. But if you take a lot more pictures than video and are in the market for a digital SLR camera, you might be able to pull double duty out of your next purchase.

The Nikon D90 not only is a very good camera, but also lets you record 720p video at 24p. And Canon's EOS 5D Mark II steps you up to full 1080p resolution with an excellent new image processor with its DiG!C IV chip.

Sanyo also offers options in its Dual Cameras series. The Xacti VPC-FH1BK, for example, is a 1080p AVCHD camcorder and an 8-megapixel digital camera (with the form factor of a camcorder). The VPC-TH1 shoots 720p video and 8-megapixel stills, and includes a 30x optical zoom.

CAMCORDER TYPES

HD camcorders come in different sizes and prices. Some are small enough to fit in a pocket and can be had for around $300; then there are full-size 1080p wonders that will set you back $2000 or more.

Pocket camcorders. The poster child for the pocket camcorders is Pure Digital Technologies' $400 Flip MinoHD. But the Flip isn't the only pint-size and inexpensive HD camcorder. You can also put HD in your pocket with Creative Technologies' $360 Vado HD.

These camcorders are dead simple to operate, have a small LCD display for viewing your subject and the movies you've shot, connect to a computer via a built-in USB connector, and shoot in either standard definition or high-definition 720p. The Flip MinoHD and Vado HD use an internal rechargeable battery (the Vado's is removable).

You can connect these camcorders to a television via a video-out port. The Flip HD supports composite video-out and the Vado HD works with composite and HDMI connections.

Each camcorder's display is a different size. The Flip MinoHD's display is the smallest, at 1.5in. The Vado HD's screen is 2in. Their lenses are also different. The Vado HD's lens captures a wider image - so from the same distance, you'll capture more of a scene on the Vado HD than you can with the Flip.

Both come with editing software, but only the Flip MinoHD has Mac-compatible software. Given that most Mac users edit video with iMovie, however, the lack of Mac software isn't a huge concern.

Vado HD. Pocket camcorders such as Creative's Vado HD let you take HD with you wherever you go.

Convenient and affordable though these pocket camcorders are, they're limited in significant ways. As mentioned earlier, they include only a digital zoom and lack image stabilisation. The CMOS sensors and lenses aren't of the highest quality, and white-balance settings aren't adjustable. Each of them has colour and light quirks. The MinoHD's video shot under indoor lighting is very warm (yellow). The Vado HD's outdoor shots tend to be a little oversaturated. And low-light performance is bad across the board.

Even with these limitations, pocket camcorders offer some advantages. Primarily, because they're so portable, you're able to use them spontaneously. Also, with their 720p format - the progressive video that looks good on a computer monitor – makes these the perfect camcorders for shooting quick and dirty video you'll post to a video-sharing service such as YouTube (see "Sharing Your Videos" for more on online hosting).

Sharing your videos

Fat lot of good it does you to have an HD camcorder when you can deliver its output only in standard definition. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to share HD video with the world.

Hosting online. In the past year, HD in the form of 720p streaming video has come to such sites as blip.tv (http://blip.tv), Dailymotion (http://www.dailymotion.com), Facebook (http://www.facebook.com), Flickr (http://www.flickr.com), Motionbox (http://www.motionbox.com), Vimeo (http://www.vimeo.com), and YouTube (http://www.youtube.com). You're welcome to join in by sharing your HD movies on any or all of these services.

Each site streams HD content at 1280 x 720 (720p), so it makes sense to save your video in that format (and to deinterlace it if the source is 1080i) at a data rate of between 3000 and 5000 Kbps. The Flash format is commonly used on these sites, but the source material can be .mov, AVI, MPEG-4, or H.264, since the sites generally re-encode what you upload.

But each service operates a bit differently. Dailymotion, blip.tv, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube allow you to upload HD content for free without limiting the number of uploads. However, all these services except Dailymotion and Flickr impose a 1GB file-size limit. (Dailymotion has no limits on file size, and Flickr allows you to upload only up to 90 seconds of video.) Vimeo has a free plan that limits individual movies to 500MB each, allowing one movie per week and 2GB per month. If you pay Vimeo $60 a year, you can upload 1GB movies and upload up to 20GB of movies per month. Motionbox has no limits, but the service costs $30 a year.

Each service provides an upload tool for moving your videos from your Mac to the site. Although iMovie '09 includes an option for uploading movies directly to YouTube, that option doesn't let you upload HD content - the largest resolution available is 640 x 360. Similarly, although MobileMe users can export an iMovie video to a Web gallery, the direct method for exporting from iMovie to a gallery allows a maximum resolution of 960 x 540.

Of these services, we like the venerable YouTube for a lot of reasons. It's free, it has no upload limits, it has massive exposure, and the quality of its video has improved a lot in the last year.

In between. Nestled between the small, 720p pocket cameras and the full-size camcorders is Sanyo's $1150 Xacti VPC-HD1010. With its 10x optical zoom, its ability to record 1080p video, its 2.7in LCD, and its full complement of ports, it's similar to larger camcorders in terms of its feature set. But with its compact, pistol-grip form factor and its light weight (less than 300gm), it resembles a pocket camcorder.

Full-size camcorders. Over the past several years, the world of full-size HD consumer camcorders has been very confusing. HDV or AVCHD? Tape or tapeless (and which tapeless - MiniDVD, hard drive, or flash)? Progressive or interlaced? 720 or 1080? CCD or CMOS? Thankfully, some order is starting to come to this world.

Tape-based HD camcorders are on their way out and AVCHD is the future (if not the present). But tape isn't dead yet: for some people, HDV's quality trumps AVCHD's convenience. Canon's HV30 is a highly regarded camcorder that offers 1080p resolution and a 24p Cinema Mode, sports a load of ports (including HDMI, microphone, FireWire, USB, and analog video), and is available online for less than $1500. A newer version of this camcorder, the HV40, should be available by the time you read this. Its feature set is similar to that of the HV30 but, in a sign of the times, eschews FireWire. Sony hasn't completely abandoned tape-based HD cameras either. Its HDR-HC9 Handycam is still available for about $2000.

Among AVCHD camcorders, the main players are Canon, JVC, Panasonic, and Sony (see "Full-Size HD Camcorders Compared" for details on several current and soon-to-be-released models). All the cameras listed are compatible with iMovie '09, with some restrictions.

Each one has a CMOS sensor and iMovie '09's image stabilisation doesn't work well very with these sensors: according to Apple, applying image stabilisation can introduce warping in videos. For iMovie to work with the JVC and Sony camcorders' AVCHD video, you must have an Intel Mac. Also, the JVC and Sony camcorders can use both MPEG-2 and AVCHD formats, but iMovie doesn't support the MPEG-2 files from these cameras. You can import them to your Mac but you must convert them to another format (DV or MPEG-4, for example) to work with them in iMovie.

As mentioned, the size of a sensor can influence low-light performance, and that's the case here. The Canon and Sony camcorders, with their approximately 1/3in sensors, produce better low-light results and detail than camcorders with smaller sensors. And a multitude of sensors doesn't seem to help. The Panasonic camcorders, for example, have three 1/6in CMOS sensors (one each for red, green, and blue), and these cameras' low-light results aren't as good as what you get from the Canon and Sony models.

Not Quite Big or Small. Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010 has elements of both pocket and full-size camcorders.

Of these cameras, only the Canon models offer 1080p video - the others shoot at 1080i but both the Canon and the Panasonic cameras allow you to shoot in 24p. Both the Canon and the JVC camcorders offer a bit rate as high as 24 Mbps, and this shows in the clarity of the video these cameras produce. Optical zoom ranges from 10x, for the tape-based models here and the JVC HD40, to 20x, for JVC's HD320 and HM200. Most fall in the 12x to 15x range. All the cameras include HDMI and USB 2.0 ports. Microphone and headphone ports, which for video podcasters and broadcasters are an absolute necessity, aren't on all these cameras - JVC's HD320 and HM200 and Sony's CX12 lack them.

All these camcorders provide some way to manually control focus but, regrettably, the easiest method, a manual focus ring, is less common than it once was. The Panasonic and Sony camcorders allow you to adjust focus with such a ring. The other camcorders rely on dials, touch-screen controls, or joysticks, all of which are more difficult to use when you're fine-tuning. As for manually controlling other functions - aperture, shutter speed, and white balance, for example - the Panasonic cameras lead the pack.

Going Wide. Shooting from the same distance, the Vado HD's wider lens (right) captures more of the scene than the Flip MinoHD.

⌘-3

GET VIDEO IN AND OUT

With AVCHD coming to the fore as the HD standard for full-size camcorders, Apple has made greater efforts to ensure that the video footage that AVCHD cameras capture can be more easily imported than before into iMovie and Final Cut Express. But unlike tape-based standard-definition and HDV camcorders, iMovie '09 has to work a measure of magic to import video from AVCHD cameras (iMovie '08 can also work with AVCHD).

The import process of tapeless camcorders differs from that of tape-based camcorders in that you needn't scan through the tape, locate the video you want, and then import it. Instead, attach an AVCHD camcorder to your Mac, launch iMovie, and initiate access on the camcorder; then iMovie '09 will open an Import window that displays the separate clips on the camera. Within this window, you can import all the camera's clips or, by toggling a switch at the bottom of the window from Automatic to Manual, select only the clips you want: just select each clip and then click on the Import Checked button.

For users accustomed to tape cameras, this method of capturing clips can be disconcerting. We've heard from a few users who thought iMovie '08 and '09 were broken because the software behaved so differently than when they were using a tape-based camera.

When importing the video, you choose one of two options: 960 x 540 (Large) or 1920 x 1080 (Full). This choice is an important one, so take the time to think about how you intend to output your footage.

If you intend to burn the finished video to DVD, to create a movie that you'll display on your Apple TV or your iPod or iPhone plugged into a TV, or to share your video on the Web in standard definition, choose the 960 x 540 pixel option. This will produce a video that looks clean on all these devices, because iMovie automatically takes care of the jagged lines caused by interlaced video, as you would get from a camcorder that shoots 1080i video.

Indeed, "Why are there jagged lines in my video?" is a common question among users new to digital formats and output options, so let's take a moment to understand what's going on.

Seeing horizontal jaggies across your video picture is evidence of interlacing, which is an old standard of broadcast technique in which alternate lines of video signal are sent to a TV and the TV displays one set of lines after another. At 25 frames per second in Australia's PAL broadcast format, you don't notice the flickering between the alternate lines. Modern TVs, however, and computer displays, screen one full, display-sized image progressively, one after another. If

NIkon's D90, like Canon's 5D MkII, offers its user the dual ability to shoot high quality still pictures and then switch to video mode to capture high-def footage.

you screen interlaced video on a progressive display, the alternating lines of video become very obvious. If you are exporting video - from whatever software you prefer to use - and the jaggy lines persist, look for a "de-interlacing" option in the export settings. Except for when you're using iMovie. Stay with me now.

If you want your movie to stay in a native HD format (such as 1080i or 720p) so you can view it in its original state, burn it to a Blu-ray compatible disc, or later convert it to 720p for distribution on a video-sharing site that supports HD video, choose the 1920 x 1080 option.

Exporting video imported at the 960 x 540 setting is easy. Choose the setting you want from iMovie '09's Share menu and the video that pops out the other end will look as good as the encoder you choose to make it with. Exporting full 1920 x 1080 video, however, can be problematic – particularly with iMovie '09 – depending on the format you choose.

Exporting 720p video in iMovie '09 can be rough – at least at the time this article was written. Although there's an option for deinterlacing video in the QuickTime Movie Settings window, it doesn't work. You can export 720p video from 1080i video files, but the results will be jagged. To get deinterlaced 720p video from 1080i files with iMovie '09, you have to export the 1080i video and then convert it with a utility such as Squared 5's free MPEG Streamclip or Jan Schotsman's free JES Deinterlacer.

Older Macs. PowerPC Macs don't support AVCHD editing. However, you can use one of a handful of utilities to convert AVCHD files to a format compatible with iMovie '09 on a PowerPC. One such utility is ShedWorx's VoltaicHD.

Just copy a .mts file (the file format AVCHD camcorders use) to your computer, bring it into VoltaicHD, choose an export file format within VoltaicHD's preferences area, and click on Start. Conversion can be slow – tens of minutes for a minute of video. Roxio's $170 Toast Titanium 10 can also convert AVCHD files to other video formats.

What to look for when shopping for an HD camcorder

Your budget will certainly play a large part in the HD camcorder you choose, but here are the features to look for when you're ready to make a purchase

1080 progressive video. You'll get cleaner video out of the camcorder if it captures 1080p video (rather than interlaced 1080i video, which produces smoother but more-jagged images).

The right format for your situation. Do you have an older Intel Mac or a PowerPC Mac? If you purchase an AVCHD camcorder, you're going to have to jump through the extra hoops of converting your video so you can edit it on your older Mac. Nearly obsolete though tape may be, HDV camcorders will be a friendlier fit with your Mac. Plus, the video these cameras produce can be spectacular.

Strong optical zoom. All full-size camcorders have optical zoom. If you sometimes shoot your kid's soccer games from the last row of the bleachers, look for a camcorder with a long reach - 12x optical zoom or better.

Large sensor. The larger the sensor is, the better the detail and the low-light performance generally are. If you'll regularly shoot in low light, seek a camcorder with a 1/3in sensor.

Media options. If you need to shoot non-stop for long periods, get a camcorder with a hard drive. If you can deal with shorter shooting times but want to quickly move media without also moving your camcorder, find a camcorder that records to removable media. Tape, for example, limits you to one hour of shooting but is easily swapped.

Ample ports and functional design. Ports are important, particularly if one vital to your work or pleasure is missing.

Videocasters and filmmakers doing professional work will absolutely need a camcorder with a microphone port.

Desire a light for your camera? Check for a hot-shoe for attaching such a light. Also check the position of the ports. If they're hidden under a battery (as they are on some Panasonic camcorders) or tied to a base (Sony does this with some cameras), you may be denied access to those ports when you need them.

Manual controls. The point-and-shoot convenience of today's HD camcorders is great, but if you need to work outside the box, look for greater manual control of the camera's functions.

At the very least, you should be able to manually adjust a camcorder's exposure and white balance. And, ideally, you won't have to wrestle with a camcorder to focus it manually.

Portability. Small as full-size camcorders are, they're not small enough to put in your pocket. If you often wish you had a camcorder with you to capture your life's journey, consider getting a pocket camcorder. The video you get from it won't be equal to what you capture with a full-size camcorder, but you'll at least capture something.

And the free HandBrake software can convert .mts files to MPEG-4 and H.264 files.

As for the pocket camcorders? Easy. When you plug one into your Mac, iPhoto will launch by default and offer to import the videos from your camera. You can either click on Import All or select the videos you want and click on Import Selected. Within iMovie '08 and '09, you can access those videos by clicking on the iPhoto Videos entry in the Event Library pane.

We've arrived. With the advent of reasonably affordable HD camcorders, the standardisation of some of their features, the software necessary to take advantage of their high-definition video, and a multitude of ways to share their output with others, consumer HD has arrived. Isn't it time you brought greater clarity to your life?

Just as this magazine was going to print, Kodak announced the availability in Australia of the Zx1 pocket-size HD camcorder. Expect a product review next month.

For some shooters, tape-based cameras such as Canon's HV40 are preferred. The HV40 offers the benefit of working with the HDV format.

AUSTRALIAN

Macworld

Whether you're new to computers, or just new to Mac, or whether you're an experienced Mac user looking to hone their skills – you'll find the book of value

GRAB YOUR COPY NOW

SUBSCRIPTION:
1800 804 160
Corporate Deals Available
subscriptions@niche.com.au
www.niche.com.au/magazines/view/MB

Hotlinks

More on Stephen Bruel
http://thenotepad.com.au/
Brett Kingman's YouTube channel
www.youtube.com/user/Burgerman666
SM Pro Audio MC-01
www.smproaudio.com
SM Pro Audio Mic Thing
www.smproaudio.com
Shure SM-57
www.shure.com
Roxio Listen
www.roxio.com/enu/products/toast/titanium/listen.html
Macs and Music – AMW Forums
www.macworld.com.au/forums/index.php?showforum=22
Shorten for Mac
www.hornig.net/shorten.html

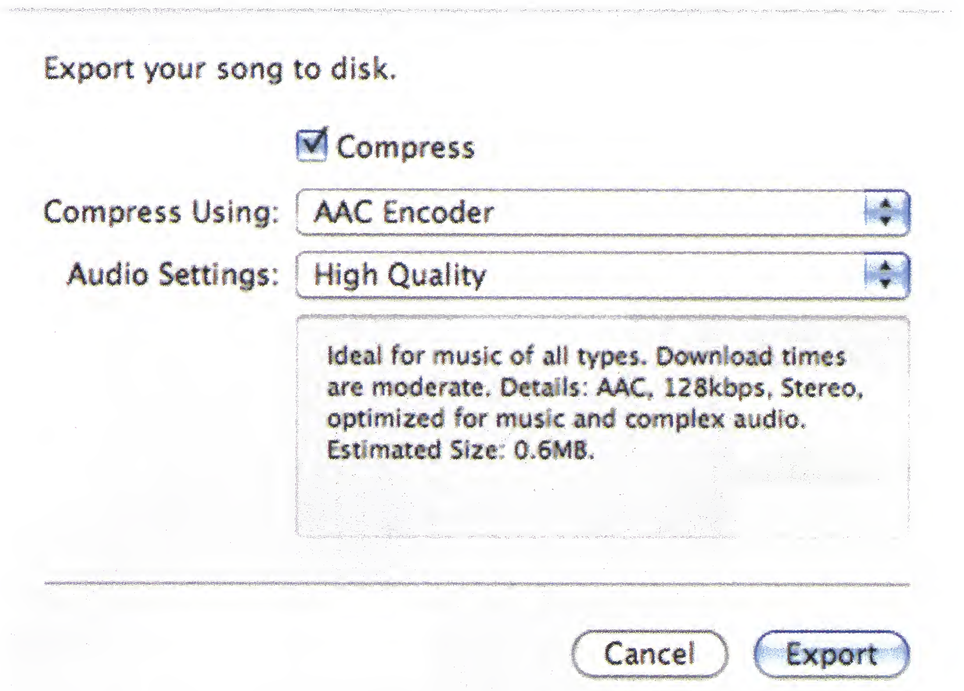
Audio Roundtable

Welcome to the first of what will hopefully be a regular series of roundtables on everything audio, with *AMW* readers providing the topics of discussion. If you'd like something answered, the 'Macs and Music' section on the *AMW* forums is the place to put your hand up (see Hotlinks).

This month's roundtable participants are Stephen Bruel and Brett Kingman, who both work in the music tech industry as well as being musicians of note.

Stephen Bruel has worked in the music, professional audio, broadcast and media industries for 20 years and holds tertiary qualifications in marketing, music technology and journalism. He has international marketing communications experience with Fairlight and was marketing manager for Digidesign South East Asia for five years. He recently set up his own consultancy business, The Note Pad (see Hotlinks).

Brett Kingman is a Melbourne guitarist with a career spanning over 25 years as hired gun for many of Australia's greats including Daryl Braithwaite, Ross Wilson, Joe Camilleri, Vika & Linda Bull, Renee Geyer, Jenny Morris and James Reyne, with whom he is currently touring and recording with. Also well known in the guitar and guitar-related products international manufacturing industry, Kingman has just returned from a trip to Germany for the Frankfurt Musikmesse, where he successfully launched his own line of guitar effects pedals - DVK Technologies. He also has a popular YouTube channel in which he demonstrates his collection of guitar stomp boxes, occasionally with young daughter Sadie (see Hotlinks) who is usually the star of the show).



1) How hard is it to take your old LPs, and convert them into AAC format, so they can be burned to a CD? And how on earth do you do it and what do you need?
TLCAUS on AMW forums

As you are most probably aware, Advanced Audio Coding (AAC) is the default audio format of all Apple audio products (iPhone, iPod and iTunes) and it is widely believed that this format sounds better and takes up less space than an MP3.— Stephen Bruel

⌘-?

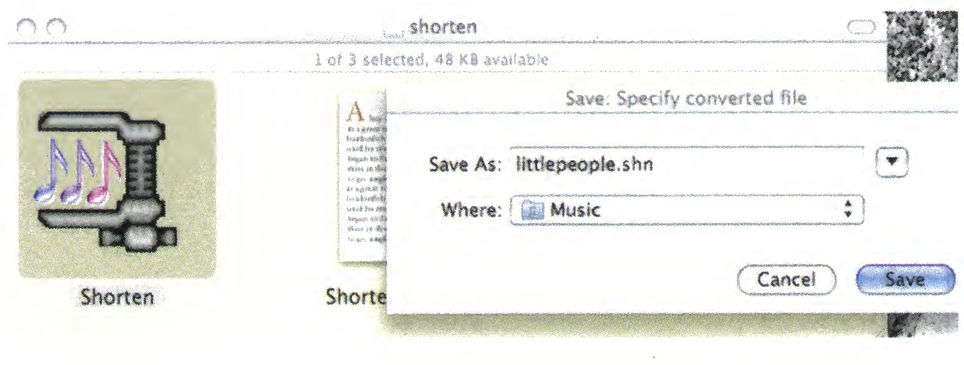
The set-up: To convert LPs to the AAC format you will need the following materials:

- record player with a stereo audio out
- Mac with the inbuilt stereo audio in
- a cable to connect the two (can vary depending on record players and whether you use a desktop or laptop)
- LP to AAC conversion software (GarageBand)

For conversion: The most inexpensive way to do this would be to use GarageBand. Simply set it up as you would to record any audio instrument, select record and drop the needle and away you go. This will record the audio as one large audio file. To separate the songs, you could cut the audio file at each song break, select and move each individual song onto a new track. You could then select Share – Export Song to Disk and do this for each song, so that you end up with a collection of AAC audio files, one for each song from the LP.

For CD burning: You could use the onboard Mac CD burning software. Easy, cheap and at hand.

An alternative approach: A few years ago I faced the same challenge as I had some rare old records (Sunnyboys, Beatles, The Jam – yes I am showing my age) that I was keen to digitise and be able to hear more regularly on my iPod. I used a software program from Roxio called CD Spin Doctor. This software was easy to use and saved a lot of time and editing (It is now called Roxio Listen – see Hotlinks). It had inbuilt features that automatically separated the songs, reduced noise hiss and crackles which old LPs inherently have, and also allowed some basic EQ options to "brighten" old recordings. I would suggest using this or some similar product.



2) Could you offer some advice on how to share a GB file so I can lay down bass and drums and send the file to the guitarist in London to add their tracks. I think there is another app whose name escapes me that does this.
pmoeser via AMW forums

There's actually a few ways of doing this, although neither offers a simple sharing of the same GarageBand project workspace.
— David Holloway

Option A: Record your tracks in GarageBand, ensuring that at least one of the tracks starts at Bar 1.

Using GarageBand's Share menu, export the song to disk as an MP3, AAC or AIFF file (AIFF is selected by unchecking the 'Compress' box when the export window pops up) (garageband.jpg)

Click once on the exported file and select the 'Compress' option from the File menu in the Finder. This will further decrease your file size. I managed to compress a 7.4MB .aiff file to 6.4MB.

Email the file to other GarageBand user who can uncompress it and import it into GarageBand.

Here's the crucial part – when they've recorded their parts, they need to do the same export process you did, except to delete the track you sent in the first place so that you receive their tracks only, which can then be imported and added to what you originally recorded.

Pros: Fairly quick to do

Cons: You end up working with files that incorporate multiple tracks, limiting mixing and effects options.

Option B: Save a copy of the project and complete the below steps using the copy rather than the original project.

Delete all audio data except for Track 1, then via the Share menu, export the song to disk as an .aiff file. You know have a separate file for just that track.

There is an important point to note at this juncture that will save a lot of heartache. If a particular track doesn't start at Bar 1, write down exactly what part of the project it does start so that the person at the other end knows where to place the track. Undo the deletion of the other tracks or re-open the copy of the project.

Repeat steps 1-3 for each track Compress the files and a text file with any information about start and end points for tracks into one archive via the File menu in the Finder. Email to collaborator

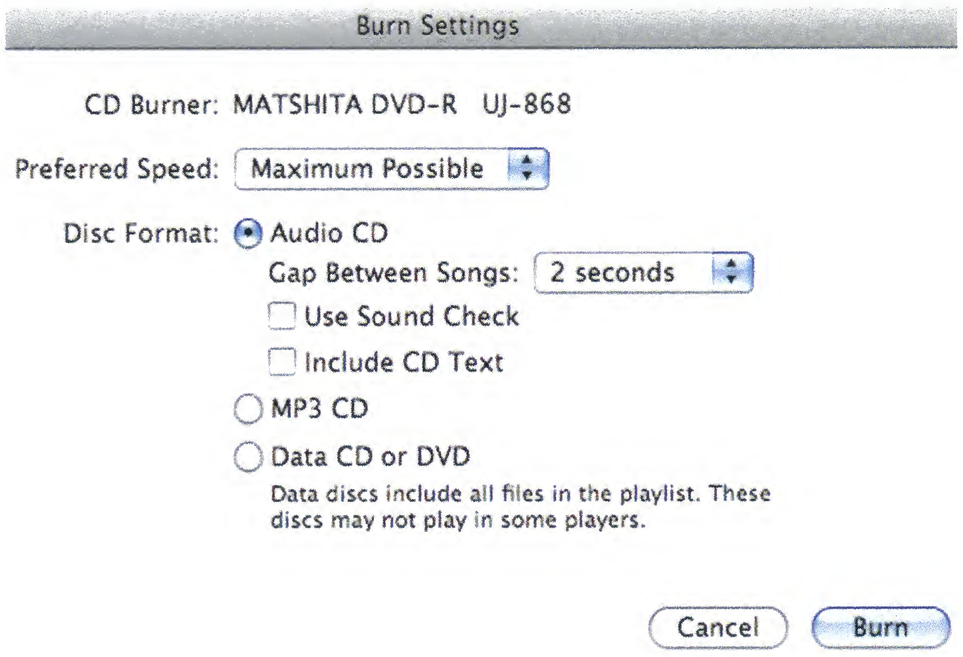
As with Option A, have collaborator go through same process, ignoring your original files unless he/she has altered them in some way.

Import the new tracks into your project and complete any further work.

Pros: Gives you full maximum flexibility over each track throughout the process

Cons: Can be time-consuming and may be frustrating for collaborator to line up tracks in a more complex project.

As far as an application that helps with sending large audio files, there's a great little application called Shorten (see Hotlinks) which reduces .aiff or .wav files in size by 50% without any loss of audio data. The only catch is that user at other end needs to have Shorten installed to expand the archive. It's a free application and well worth having if you send large audio files regularly to Mac or Linux users.



3) One of the most regular questions I get from readers revolves around microphones. If you could only recommend one microphone for broad general use under $300, what would you recommend? I'm thinking here of a Mac user who may only have GarageBand and wants to maybe do some podcasting or record their acoustic guitar.
David Holloway

The SM Pro Audio MC-01 studio condenser microphone would have to be one of the best buys on the planet at the moment. $275 buys you a high quality all-round vocal and acoustic instrument mic, complete with a shock mount and carry pouch. This mic is suitable to record everything from vocals through to acoustic instruments and drums. You will need an audio interface that can supply the necessary 48v phantom power to the microphone. These can be had inexpensively from a wide variety of manufacturers including M-Audio, Digidesign, Edirol, Presonus etc. — Brett Kingman

An alternative or 'one-stop-shop' solution would involve a simple XLR to USB cable that acts as a direct audio interface to your computer and a dynamic microphone (which doesn't require phantom power) along the lines of a Shure SM57 or similar.

4) Can you burn podcasts, and then play them on a standard CD player, and if the answer is NO, how do you convert them so you can?"
TLCAUS on AMW Forums

I'll jump in among this esteemed company and answer an easy one. In iTunes it's as simple as:— David Holloway

- Select 'New Playlist' from File menu in iTunes
- Drag any podcasts you want to add to that playlist.
- Click on 'Burn Disc' at bottom right of iTunes window. A window will open allowing you to select the CD format for burning. Click 'OK' once you've made your selections. (itunes-podcastburning.jpg)
- Insert a CD. Done!

If you are going to be burning podcasts to CD regularly, it may be worth setting up a Smart Playlist instead of a standard one. For example, I set one up that automatically adds any podcast downloaded to iTunes in the past seven days. If you're a podcast junkie, you may need to add an extra rule on limiting the number added to the playlist. For the regular commuter needing CDs, this takes a lot of the work out of the process and ensures you get new podcasts to listen to.

5) Another evergreen question falls around use of a normal bedroom or other space within a house for recording. What are some good basic acoustic tips for someone using a normal room for recording?"
David Holloway

Firstly, you want your environment to be as free from ambient noise as possible. You'd be surprised at the things you hear when listening back to a recorded track; things like computer fan noise, tapping on floors when singing or playing, birds, dogs, road and air traffic all seem to appear after the recording process because you're so used to them in everyday life that they go largely ignored until you're listening back to your track ("what the hell is that?").— Brett Kingman

Sonic isolation of your recording source can help here and there are some simple tools designed specifically for this purpose. The Mic Thing (again, made by SM Pro Audio) would be the obvious low cost solution that is both portable and highly effective. And it will save you from having to spend big dollars on sound-proofing your studio space.

Microphone placement will play a big part in the final quality of your recording. When recording vocals for example, perhaps with a condenser mic (preferred) you should consider using a 'pop shield' between you and the mic to eliminate loud 'P's' breaths and peaks in the vocal sound. Pop shields can be bought from most music stores, usually for below $50-$60 or you can be inventive and fashion your own from a coat hanger and stockings! (I've seen it done, even in pro studios..)

When recording things like acoustic guitars and other stringed instruments, even drums, it pays to experiment a little with microphone placement. Generally, the closer you place your microphone to its sound source, the fuller or more 'in your face' your recording will be. Placing your microphone a little off axis or farther away from the source can be desirable also, particularly if you want to give the listener a sense of space or dimension. Doing this will also add 'room ambience' (natural reverb or surface reflection from things like walls and floors) and so again, special attention must be paid to the elimination of background noise.

⌘-?

Mac mini, maxi TV

How to optimise a Mac mini for high-def TV

Now that Apple has finally blessed the Mac mini with an NVIDIA graphics chip, the Little Mac That Could is worth considering as a high-def media centre.

The Mac platform has long had a decent media centre interface in Elgato's EyeTV - letting you watch, record and timeshift digital television - but it's been let down by the Mac mini's integrated Intel graphics and lack of support for MPEG-2 hardware acceleration for decoding the television signal.

The latest Mac mini goes a long way to rectifying this by combining a 2.0 or 2.26GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor with an NVIDIA GeForce 9400M graphics processor (blessed with 128 or 256MB of shared memory, depending on whether you're running 1GB or 2GB of 1067 MHz DDR3 RAM).

We tested a 2.0GHz Mac mini wih 2GB of RAM, connecting it to our 1080p Sony Bravia test display via a mini-DVI to DVI adaptor and a DVI to HDMI cable. DVI doesn't carry audio, so we ran a 3.5mm to 2xRCA audio cable from the Mac mini's headphone jack to the stereo RCA inputs alongside the Bravia's second HDMI input.

When setting up the Mac mini as a media centre, the first step is to open the Displays panel in the System Preferences. If your television offers Full HD 1080p resolution, select 1920x1080 (interlaced) under the Display tab and set the Refresh Rate to 50 Hertz (PAL). If your television is a 720p (1280x720 pixels), try experimenting with the 1920x1080 and 1344x756 size settings.

If the computer desktop is too large or small for the display, switch to the Options tab and experiment with the Overscan settings. Also try adjusting the overscan on your television, with the best setting likely to be 1:1 pixel mapping (called "Full pixel" on the Bravia) to ensure the picture isn't stretched.

Next, switch to the Color tab and click Calibrate, even if the Mac mini has correctly identified your television. Follow the onscreen instructions to set brightness and contrast on your television as well as luminance on the Mac, which might require a lot of squinting. Next tick "Use native gamma", or else experiment with settings up to around 2.2. Now tick "Use native white point", or else try about 6500K. Calibrating the display significantly improves the picture, but you might want to also consider one of the recently released adaptors converting mini-DVI and mini-DisplayPort directly to HDMI.

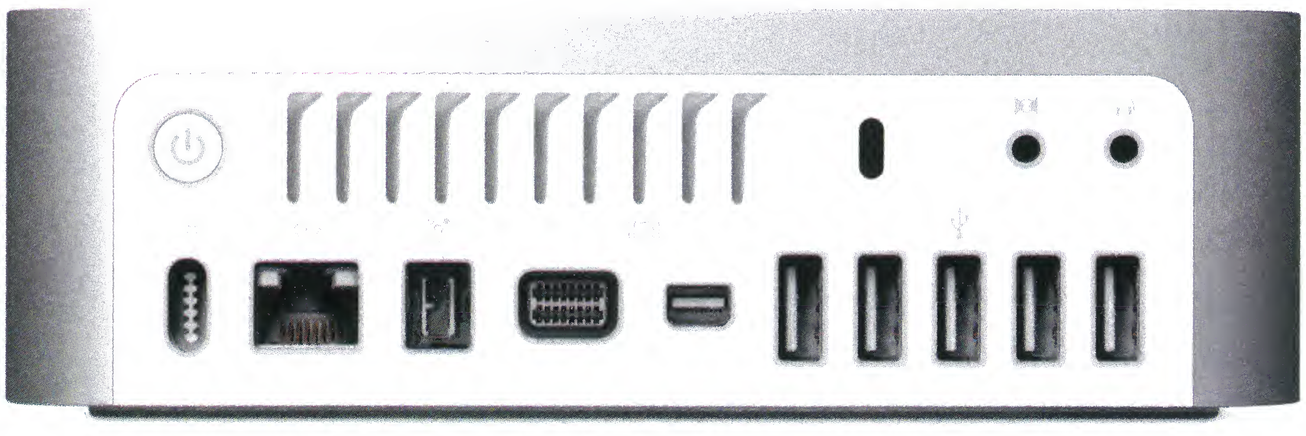
Now it's time to install EyeTV, which is worth combining with an IceTV subscription for remote scheduling and other advanced features. Don't be confused by the Freeview campaign - any device with HD tuners will let you watch any free-to-air channel.

After installing EyeTV, dip into the Display Preferences and change the Deinterlace settings to progressive for both Standard and HDTV to reduce the motion blur. You'll probably want Overscan set to off and Full Screen set to normal.

Even with all these settings in place, the picture still doesn't look quite as good as a player using MPEG-2 hardware acceleration, such as a dedicated set-top box or a Windows media centre. If you've an eye for detail, you'll still see slightly more noise and loss of detail in the shadows. No matter how much grunt you throw at the problem, the picture quality is always going to suffer slightly until third-party apps such as EyeTV have access to hardware acceleration.

Of course, people are watching less free-to-air TV these days. Some of the new Macs, including the Mac mini, offer MPEG-4 hardware acceleration, although it only seems to work with H.264 content downloaded from Apple and played with native applications. Cupertino is reluctant to talk about hardware acceleration, despite our requests, but the numbers speak for themselves. When playing 1080i recordings in EyeTV, the Mac mini's CPU chugs away at 40 per cent. Yet if you play Apple's 1080p H.264 samples, in QuickTime or iTunes, the CPU usage drops to 17 per cent. This leaps to about 60 per cent if you play the same H.264 files in third-party apps such as Plex, XBMC or VLC.

So what does all this mean? If you'll mostly be watching high-def downloads from Apple, the MPEG-4 hardware acceleration makes the new NVIDIA Mac mini a brilliant lounge room companion. An Apple TV will do the same job, but you'd lose all the other advantages of having a computer in the lounge room. If you use Elgato's EyeTV to watch HDTV broadcasts on a big television, you'll get much better results with the NVIDIA Mac mini than its predecessor, but fussy viewers will still spot the lack of MPEG-2 hardware acceleration. — *Adam Turner*



The new Mac mini has all the right ports for connecting to your TV.

Installing Mac apps, 101

Switchers playing with their new Macs have probably revealed similarities with Windows but you're forgiven if you haven't grasped how applications are installed in Mac OS X. It's totally different than Windows but once you understand what's going on it is more intuitive.

A Disk Image, or DMG, may download as one file, but it's really a disk image of its own and may contain a huge number of files, folders, user settings, and more. Almost every application that you download will come as a DMG file (though sometimes they are compressed within a "tarball" or "gzip" wrapper) containing at least one program file and accompanying documentation.

To use a DMG, just double-click on it and wait for a bit while Mac OS X "mounts" it. You can then run programs from the disk just as if you'd inserted an installation CD. When it's mounted, a DMG file will show up in the Finder under Devices.

Most DMG files will automatically load a splash screen showing you how to install the program. For example, after downloading Picturesque, an easy-to-use image effects program, the Picturesque DMG mounts and then a window opens with the instruction: "Drag Picturesque to the Applications folder to install".

It's not kidding: the Picturesque icon is the actual app file, which contains the entire program and all accompanying bits and pieces it needs. The Applications folder icon is a live alias that points to the Mac OS X Applications folder. Drag and drop the Picturesque icon onto the Applications folder and you're done; you can now unmount the Picturesque DMG file by clicking on the Eject symbol to the right of the Picturesque entry in Finder.

The beauty of the Mac OS X file system is that there are no application conflicts, as there is in Windows; apps run from your desktop, the Applications folders, or nearly anywhere else in exactly the same way.

You can also drag specific applications onto the Dock so they're always available to launch with one click: to do this, simply drag the icon from the Applications folder between two Dock icons, wait until they scooch aside, and let go. Your application will be there, ready to use whenever you need it.

Some Mac apps, such as Adobe's CS3 package, come with an installer application that runs in a very similar fashion to a Windows installer. You need only click through the user prompts to begin the installation.

— "Switcher sensei" David Braue is Australian Macworld's online editor. He is a Mac convert with about a year's experience.

Needs NoteBook. Has NoteBook.

Stickies, scraps of paper, web clippings, meeting notes, reminders — take control of it all with Circus Ponies NoteBook, the award-winning application for managing information. Get organized using a familiar notebook interface, with pages and tabs, sections and subsections. "Clip" web research, e-mails and other content to your Notebooks for later reference. Create voice-annotated notes and review them from your computer or iPod. Diagram and sketch when words won't suffice. Find anything instantly using NoteBook's patented Multidex™. Share your Notebooks as PDFs or as websites. And much more. NoteBook has everything you need to get organized.

Download NoteBook right now and try it for yourself, **FREE** for 30 days.

www.circusponies.com/trialmwau

CIRCUS PONIES™ NoteBook

© 2009 Circus Ponies Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Circus Ponies, NoteBook, the NoteBook logo, and Multidex are trademarks of Circus Ponies Software, Inc. All other trademark are the property of their respective owners.

Apple Store · mac centric · next byte · PICA australia · Streetwise.com.au

⌘-?

Microsoft Reader tip

Missing channel revealed.

If you suspect that a speaker (say, the right speaker) in your MacBook or MacBook Pro is not working properly, there's an easy way to tell for sure. In Audio MIDI Setup (Applications/Utilities), you can select "Properties for... Built-in Output', and bring the output level for the right channel down to zero. (This will reveal if the speaker is faulty.) If you choose to configure your speakers with the same software, you can get it to output noise to each separate speaker.

skyhawkmatthew
via AMW forums

Each month, Microsoft gives an Arc Mouse valued at $99 to the Australian Macworld *reader who submits (via email or the* AMW *website) the best and most useful tip. Preference will be given to undocumented tips but it is not an exclusive condition.*

The award-winning Arc Mouse fuses fashion and functionality with its sleek, collapsible design that folds the mouse almost in half, providing the comfort of a full-size mouse coupled with the portability of a notebook mouse.

Flipping the mouse shut automatically turns the power off to save battery life. The Arc Mouse also features a snap-in magnetic micro-transceiver which effortlessly snaps into the bottom of the mouse, making packing up easier than ever. Other features of the Arc Mouse include battery status indicator, customisable buttons, and an ergonomic design.

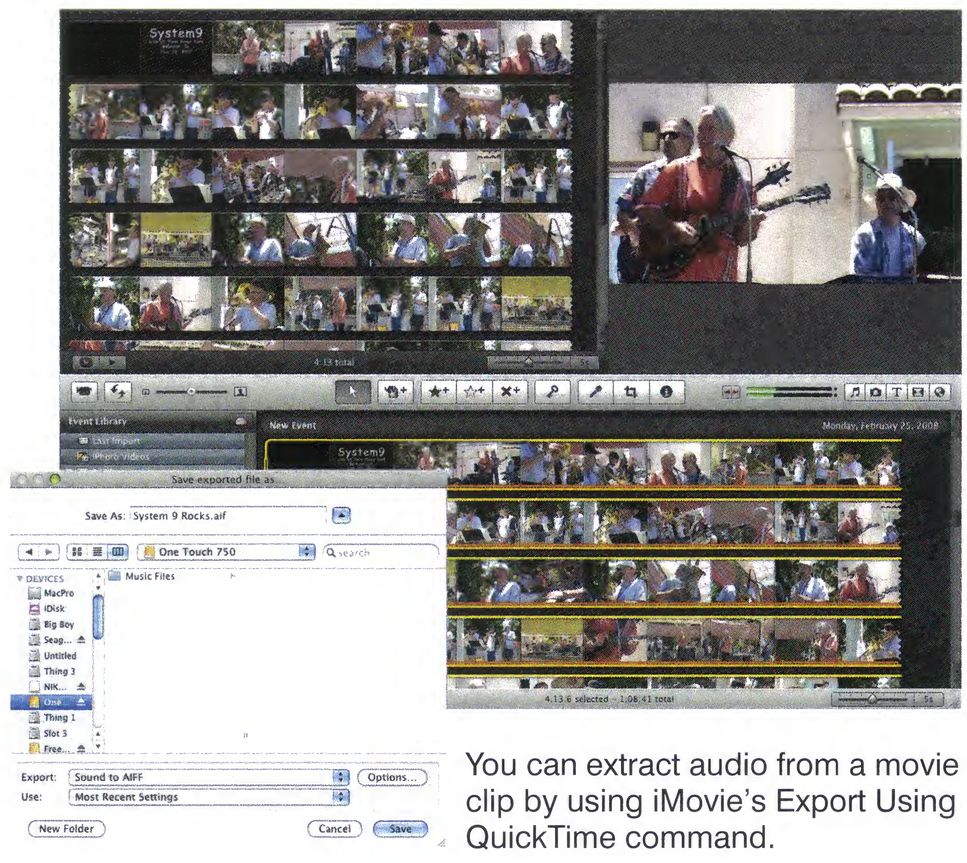
Email your tip with the subject header "Help reader tip", including your full name, address and phone number, to amweditor@niche.com.au or make a contribution in the Help section of www.macworld.com.au.

All reader tips offered online or via mail/email become the sole property of Niche Media.

Extract Audio from Movies with iLife '08 or '09

I've shot many home movies in DV format, and each is about 60 minutes long. I would like to extract portions of the audio and burn these to a CD. Can this be done using iMovie or GarageBand (or both)?
James Emrich

The easiest way to do this is using Apple's iMovie '08 - $79 as part of the iLife suite. Select the portion of the movie from which you want to extract the sound track and then drag it into the Project pane. Choose Share: Export Using QuickTime. In the Save Exported File As window that appears, choose Sound To AIFF from the Export pop-up menu and click on Save (see "Extract of iMovie"). iMovie will export a file that contains just the sound track. You can then drag that audio file into iTunes and have your way with it.



You can extract audio from a movie clip by using iMovie's Export Using QuickTime command.

Reset your Keychain

I've changed my account password multiple times, and along the way I've forgotten my keychain password. Is there a way to reset it?
Adam Goetz

Launch Keychain Access (found in /Applications/Utilities), select Keychain Access: Preferences, and then under the General tab click on Reset My Keychain. As the text below this button indicates, this saves a copy of your old keychain and creates a new, empty keychain that you can open with your current administrator's password. From this day forward, Mac OS X will add passwords to the new keychain. At this point, you're probably muttering, "But I want to access the passwords in my old keychain, not create a new keychain." And I'd mutter right back, "Do you really want a keychain so insecure that any joker with a Mac tips and troubleshooting column can reveal how to crack it open with a piece of string and a steely gaze?" No, you don't. Therefore, the solution is to start fresh. Unfortunately, if you really need those old passwords, you'll have to search your memory and try every password you can recall in the hope that one of them unlocks your previous keychain.

Identify your Mac Model

I have a MacBook Intel Core 2 Duo running at 2GHz. I'd like to upgrade it to hold 4GB of memory, but I'm not sure if it

Forget password, use an account

I am experiencing performance issues on my MacBook Pro. Things are slow to load and some software is doing strange things like not showing all available options. I only have 4GB of space left on my hard drive. Would that be at all likely? And the next question is, if so... are there any instructions on how to "clean up" space on your hard drive?

Jenny
via AMW forums

Create a new folder on your desktop called old files and then drag old files you haven't used in 12 months into it. After you have dragged files into the folder, Get Info (Command-I) on the folder to see how much hard drive space you would save by deleting them.

— TLCAUS, via AMW forums

Or use Whatsize - a great tool for understanding what's eating your hard drive, which needs a fair amount of available free space in order for the OS to function properly.
Get it from www.id-design.com/software/whatsize/

— Chris Oaten, editor

will hold that much. Some websites say it will hold just 2GB of RAM, yet Apple's site says it will hold 4GB.
Which is true?
via email

It depends on which MacBook you have. Apple issued several 2GHz MacBooks with Intel Core 2 Duo processors. Some support just 2GB of RAM, and others, 4GB. How do you figure out which one you have? Download a copy of Ian Page's free Mactracker to help you identify exactly which MacBook you have. Launch it on your MacBook, select the This Mac entry in the list of Mac models, and double-click on the name of your MacBook on the right side of the window. Click on the Memory/Graphics tab in the window that appears and look at the Maximum RAM entry. Here you'll learn how much RAM your specific MacBook can handle in addition to all sorts of information. Manage Photos in iMovie.

Selective memories

I imported a bunch of photos into iPhoto to use in an iMovie project I made for a friend. Is there a way to delete these images from my iPhoto library without having to select them individually? I don't like having them mixed in with my personal photos, but it takes forever to get rid of them.
Brad Bauer

I'm afraid that you'll have to remove these images manually. The good news is that it's likely you imported these pictures at the same time and iPhoto created an event for them. (Events were introduced with iPhoto '08.) To remove that event (and the pictures within it), click on the Events entry in iPhoto's Library pane, select the event that holds these images, and press Command-delete to move the images within that event to iPhoto's trash. (The event itself will disappear as well.) To truly delete the images, control-click Trash in the Library pane and choose Empty Trash from the contextual menu.
But let's back up a step. There's a common misconception that just because iMovie '08 and '09 have a Photos browser that displays an iPhotos entry, adding your photos to iPhoto and then using this Photos browser is the only avenue for accessing your images. Not so. If you don't want your iPhoto library to become cluttered with images you have no interest in keeping, you don't have to import the photos into iPhoto. Rather, fling them into a folder somewhere, and when you're ready to place the images in iMovie, drag them from that folder directly into the iMovie project - no detour through iPhoto required.

— Christopher Breen

Got a question for the experts? Send it to us at amweditor@niche.com.au or, if you want to be part of the AMW podcast, email your question as an audio clip.

STM Query of the month

Each month STM (02 8338 0222) gives a medium Rogue backpack to the Australian Macworld reader who send in or posts to the forum the most intriguing query.

STM's medium rogue backpack creates mischief for would-be thieves by concealing the laptop compartment from view and hiding it in an internal wall of the bag – so nobody knows you're carrying a laptop except you.

Medium rogue features STM's unique protection system, cushioning the laptop with high-density padding and a foam suspension cradle. Its clean design makes the backpack ideal for streetwear as well as the boardroom.

Send your query to amweditor@niche.com.au or post in the forums at www.macworld.com.au/forums. All queries and solutions remain the sole property of Niche Media.

Michael Jenkin
is a Windows guru who turned to the Mac for inspiration. We hold the iPhone responsible.

My server is in the cloud

With the world concerned about greenhouse gas emissions, now would seem a good time to reduce the consumption of power through minimising the overuse of servers.

Many servers are left idling and absorbing power, heating up corner offices but not doing anything meaningful. On weekends, they process a little email, update anti-virus definitions and sit there awaiting your commands when you return for the new week. This is as much an argument to consider hosted servers as it is about the cost involved in maintaining your own servers, cooling solutions and providing power protection.

Server farms often have many companies accessing the one server from many geographical locations from all over the world. This means many users utilising the spare CPU cycles on a server and thus avoiding the need for their own dedicated server in their office. This also means the server is not idling and not wasting power turning the fans over.

Cloud applications are helping us migrate to such hosted servers and ultimately into using less power.

Just as threatening as greenhouse gas emissions is the evolving threat of malware and spam to computer systems and networks. Spam is choking our broadband connections and malware is making us vulnerable.

Just as companies are moving to the cloud to save costs and increase productivity, anti-virus companies are evolving and creating products which are based in the cloud to make them more effective.

Most AV companies now provide cloud-based URL, spam and malware filtering. Huge databases of malformed URLs, common spam and malware patterns are updated instantly, allowing you better protection.

Besides AV vendors, other vendors have seen a path to more sustainable cloud applications that in turn help them increase market share. Blackberry has long had Blackberry Enterprise Services for their handsets and Microsoft has offered Exchange mail services with a web-based client.

You can now subscribe to a hosted Microsoft Exchange mailbox with the Blackberry Enterprise service installed and configured. You consequently have the benefits of a collaboration service including shared calendars, journals and tasks, linked to your Blackberry, all in the cloud.

The greenhouse gas issue, malware protection and hosted services seem to be topical among big business. Certainly, these are compelling reasons to offload some services to the cloud but there is one further standout, cloud-based category: virtual desktops, servers and applications.

Various flavours of Linux, Microsoft's HyperV, VMware, Terminal Server, Citrix servers and many other products, allow system virtualisation and remote desktop management. This, too, helps reduce the computing carbon footprint because many servers can accommodate many companies and users on the same hardware, leading to more efficient use of energy.

These solutions can segregate different companies on the one server, separating services, confidential data, and business processes. Ultimately, this will help provide one server running different operating systems with access to many virtual servers which may ultimately provide access to competing software products.

Where this comes into its own is when a server is in a data centre somewhere and you have access to it via the cloud. In one example I helped create, we had three offices linked to a central Microsoft terminal server with many home users and travelling users accessing the server from their hotels.

They were able to remotely link into their custom-built application without the speed issues of VPN and without being concerned about their dial-up access limitations. Printing through such a solution still means the print job comes out at your local printer and, if you wish, audio and other services can also be tunnelled over the connection.

Suddenly, more possibilities become apparent. You can have your base software hosted in the cloud. It might be more effective for your business to pay for access by the month to such a server, rather than licensing and hosting your own server locally.

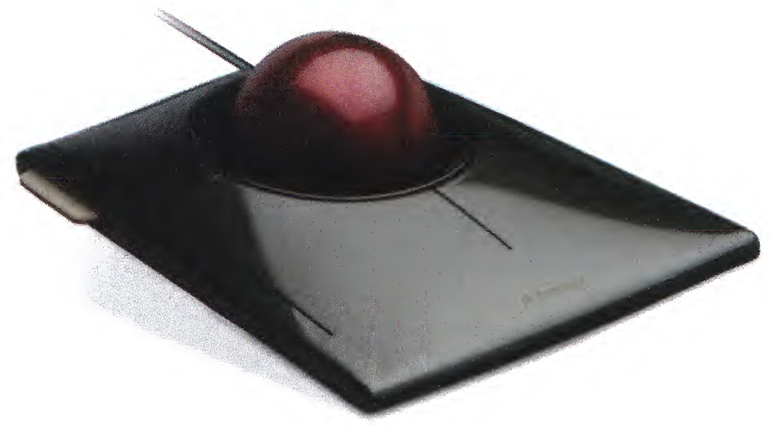
Many corporate entities instigate such solutions. It allows them to reduce the number of devices that need updating when they roll out a new application or system update. They can manage security and policies for hundreds of users on one server. This also means there is less to manage, networks are less complicated, and they need fewer staff to keep them running.

These simple examples give credence to the future predicted by Apple and Microsoft in which the next round of operating systems will be linked more with the cloud than our current versions are, leading us ultimately to a cloud-only OS version.

Broadband will only get faster and better as time moves on. Internode and many other Australian ISPs have implemented fibre-to-the-node at speeds of 25, 40 and 100Mbps to the home. The recently announced Australian Government National Broadband Network will further increase our national connectivity speed over the next eight years. At these speeds, cloud computing will blur with our local drive reality.

TRY&BYTE

New Kensington Products



Kensington 4-Port USB Charger **RRP: $49.95**

The Kensington 4-Port USB Charger for Mobile Devices charges up to four iPods, PDAs smart phones and more, simultaneously from just one wall outlet. Includes AU, EU, UK and US plugs.

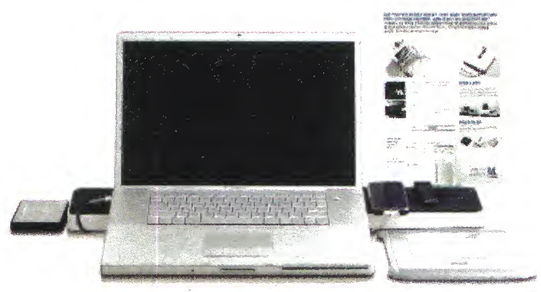
Kensington SlimBlade Trackball **RRP: $149.95**

Your computing experience just got smoother, faster and easier. Choose navigation mode to control cursor and scrolling. Media mode controls volume, play, stop, and track control, while view mode zooms in/out, and pans.

Bluelounge Products

The Sanctuary **RRP: $190**

Simple and compact design conceals a universal charger compatible with over 1500 electronic devices and a USB port. Works with iPhone and Made for iPod certified.



SpaceStation **RRP: $140**

Ergonomic laptop rest, with integrated 4-port USB hub & cord management. Also includes a business card slot and a very handy page holder to keep documents upright for easy reference.

CableBox **RRP: $59**

Under or on the desk, next to the computer, or behind the TV, loose tangled cables are always untidy dust traps. CableBox is the solution to solve these issues.

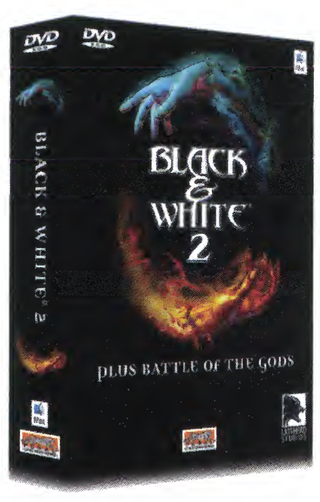
New Games

Lego Batman

Gotham City is falling to pieces!

Play as Batman and his sidekick Robin as you build, swing and fight your way through Gotham City. Then jump into the story from the other side and play as Batman's foes.

RRP: $64.95



Black & White 2

Play as a just God or as a God of War. Wage massive wars, sieges and battles or use your skill and power to keep the peace.

Choose and customise the Creature that's right for you from a selection of Ape, Cow, Lion, Tiger and Wolf and eventually even a Turtle.

RRP: $79.95

E&OE. Prices and specifications subject to change without notice. Prices do not include delivery. Images for illustration purposes only.

Distributed by Try and Byte.

Unit 17, 6-8 Herbert St, St Leonards NSW 2065
Tel **(02) 9906 5227** • Fax (02) 9906 5605
www.tryandbyte.com.au
info@tryandbyte.com.au

Available from:
Apple resellers: apple.com/au/buy
Apple retail: apple.com/au/retail
Apple online: store.apple.com.au

AUSTRALIAN

Macworld

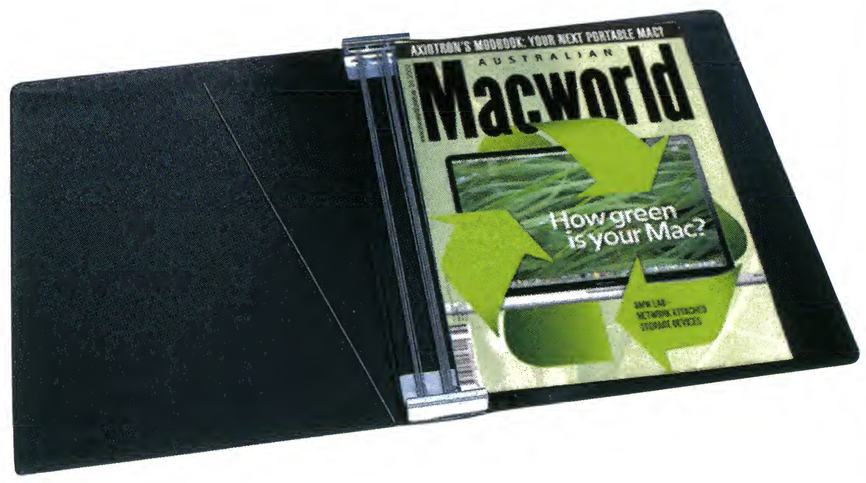
LOOKING FOR A TAX BREAK THIS YEAR?

Subscribe by June 30 and you may be eligible to receive a tax deduction on your subscription!

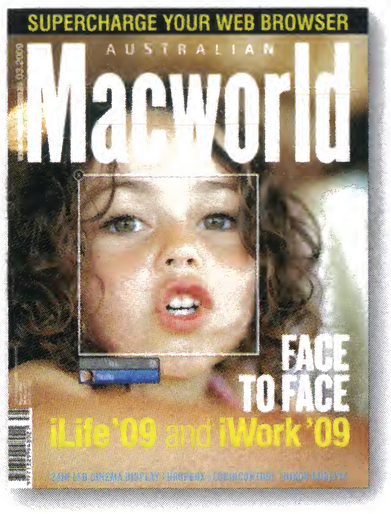
BONUS SUBSCRIPTION GIFTS:

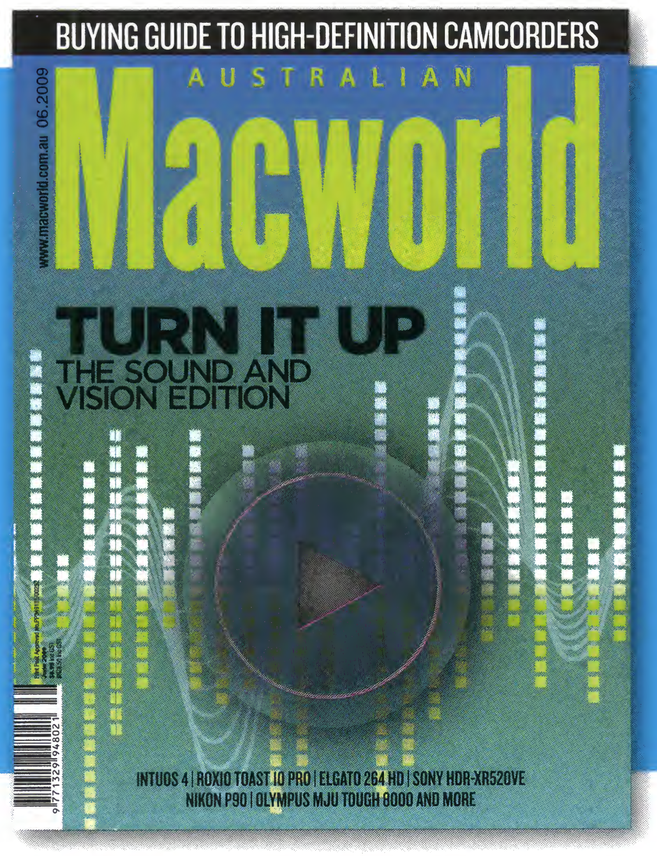
1 YEAR:
an *AMW* magazine binder

Keep all your *Australian Macworld* magazines in the one place for the new financial year, with this sleek twelve-issue magazine binder.



2 YEARS:
an *AMW* magazine binder + 3 bonus issues





Subscribe now:

2 years $129 (save $38) or 1 year $79

Subscribe online:
www.niche.com.au/subscriptions
and get $5.00 off the subscription price!

Freecall: 1800 804 160

*Promotion available to residents of Australia only.

30031_2

Tablet tailored to the user

View your options, make your choices. *Australian Macworld* puts latest-release hardware and software through its paces.

The Intuos4 brings a new direction for Wacom's tablet device. With the previous iterations of the tablet seemingly complete in their functionality, you have to wonder, where else this device can be taken. I'm sure the developers and designers at Wacom asked themselves the same question and the answer seemed to be "give the users what they most need". And that is customisability.

Out of the box you notice major differences in the design and layout of the tablet. The ambidextrous design, new button layout with ExpressKeys, TouchRing and even small OLED displays looks great. Very slick and certainly conscious of the creatives who will be drawn to this device. The elegant lines and layout of buttons give the tablet a well earned facelift and bring it in line with current models of Mac and PC workstations that are popular in design studios.

Once I was over the lickable design I was curious to see how it would help my workflow and if, in fact, it would take long to adopt in my workflow.

On closer inspection the small details seemed to be the most impressive. For instance, the outer surface has been re-worked to a matte finish so it feels good on the side of your palm. No more skin skidding across the case.

Set-up was a snap. On both Leopard (OS X 10.5) and Tiger (OS X 10.4) the software updated my previous Wacom preference pane without issue. A bonus in the package are sketching applications from AutoDesk SketchBook Express and Corel Painter Sketch Pad which are both fun and worth using. Further to this are some plug-ins and brushes for Photoshop. All the bonus applications and features take advantage of the added sensitivity of the pen and tablet. The new layout allows more flexibility as you can use it in the standard landscape position or in portrait orientation. This makes the Intuos4 far more accessible to artists and illustrators who may work in the vertical orientation frequently.

The ExpressKeys give you far more choice in terms of what actions you wish to use more frequently. It is essentially the same as before, with the addition of a couple of nice new features. When pressed, the Precision Mode button slows the cursors' tracking speed to allow more defined strokes in tight spaces and the Display Toggle lets you define which monitor you want to focus on by skipping through them, thus taking full advantage of the drawing area on the tablet. This is a simple feature that may not be used a lot, but will be very handy when you need it. Particularly on the medium or small Intuos4 models.

An important new addition is the Radial Menu. This is a leap from the pop-up menu on the intuos3 that was never part of my workflow, mainly because it didn't have an intuitive GUI that made it instantly accessible, as is the case with the intuous4.

When you press the Radial Menu button a four-way icon appears over your work area that allows you to switch to just about anything you assign to it - be it a command, application, folder that you access frequently or even controlling your music player. The pre-programmed

RATINGS KEY

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Flawed
Unacceptable
Dangerous

Wacom Intuos 4	
Type	Pen tablet
Rating	4½
Pros	Highly customisable
Cons	Small buttons
RRP	$598 (medium size model)
Manufacturer	Wacom
Distributor	Wacom Australia
Reviewer	Marty Zablocki
Hot links	www.wacom.com.au

options are a sensible selection of actions that will fit most users' needs. It was obvious that the more I use it the better the Radial Menu would enhance my workflow.

The most obvious detail once the tablet is powered up are the OLED displays next to the ExpressKeys. These will ensure that you will never forget the action of a button or multiple actions of a button.

Stepping up. Having spent a lot of time using the intuos3 as a day-to-day device in lieu of a mouse, the transition to the Intuos4 was seamless.

My tendency has always been to press hard on paper when writing and so when I started out on a Wacom tablet, the sensation of drawing felt like writing on glass with a ballpoint pen. Even with the Felt Nib or Stroke Nib (both included with Intuos4) it wasn't really perfect for me. The new Elastomer Nib that comes with the Intuos4 immediately put me in my comfort zone. The rubber nib grips the surface with just the right amount of friction. It's akin to signing a credit card receipt at the supermarket on those rubber conveyer belts. Awesome.

The sensitivity of the pen has been greatly improved to enable far more efficient strokes on the screen. The pressure of the tip on the tablet reads far more accurately in Adobe, Corel and Autodesk products, thanks to 2048 levels of pressure. The Precision Mode feature is a smart addition to the tablet and in turn to all these applications. The tilt of the pen is mapped with better accuracy, too, which can only be helpful to the user with a feel for using traditional media. As with the nib, the pen-mounted eraser provides you with a more accurate experience.

The ExpressKeys were never my favourite feature on the previous tablet. Mainly because remembering what they were set to do was often followed by a trip to System Preferences. The OLED displays on the Intuos4 solve that issue. The simple and clear icons indicate precisely what does what in whichever application you have running. Very nice. Layout-wise, most users will find the button and TouchRing adequate. On the other hand, users with larger hands may find the position of the lower buttons a little awkward. Users who fit this description should perhaps look at getting the large model to allow for more comfortable orientation of the keys.

The TouchRing is a vast improvement from the earlier TouchStrips for a few key reasons. Firstly, it's intuitive. The iPod click wheel showed us that the simplest of controls can be quickly adopted by a user. Here we have a ring with a button in the center that toggles through four functions, much like the iPod click wheel, with positions indicated by OLEDs. Those functions can be set to a range of actions and you can even set separate actions for a clockwise and anti-clockwise movement.

For example, in Photoshop you can set a clockwise spin of the TouchRing to redo and anti-clockwise to step backward for unlimited undos. Handy. The four setting states enables a variety of features. The only real drawback is remembering the settings. All in all, the TouchRing was a simple and elegant design solution that will successfully fulfill the functionality promised by the intuos3's TouchStrips.

Building hardware peripherals has always been a difficult task with users invariably disappointed that a certain feature wasn't better suited to their personal needs. With the Intuos4, however, Wacom has tapped into what makes consumer devices great and that's the ability to be flexible according to a user's particular work habits. Additions such as OLED displays, the TouchRing and accompanying software such as the Radial Menu allow the user to make this device work better in accordance with their personal needs.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. This is the best professional pen tablet from Wacom so far. There are plenty of new features to sway users to upgrade. The design of the tablet and pen has been revised for the better. The technology in the device provides a more responsive, natural drawing experience and the software has been updated to work efficiently with different applications and workflows. For creative pros, the benefit of an improved workflow using this device makes an upgrade a no-brainer.

Toast 10 Titanium Pro
Disc authoring software
¶¶¶¶
Comprehensive software bundle
Minor bugs
$249
Roxio
www.roxio.com.au
Chris Oaten
www.roxio.com.au

Titanium-clad value bundle

Let's face it. Apple's built-in support for burning discs is, to speak kindly, ordinary. While Apple has made so many great strides forward in other areas, disc burning has always seemed to be one task the crew at Cupertino left sitting on a shelf at the back of the room as they rushed to embrace more glamorous tasks. Thank goodness, then, for Roxio's Toast, which for years now has been the software of choice for bridging the functionality gap.

The latest Pro version of Toast comprises the bespoke authoring software plus an impressive bundle of apps. On the installation disc, in the same folder as Toast, is DiscCatalogMaker RE, CD Spin Doctor, Streamer, Disc Cover 2 RE, Get Backup 2 RE, and Mac2Tivo. In another folder titled Pro Applications, you'll find LightZone, FotoMagico, SonicFire Pro 5, and Soundsoap SE 2.2. There is also a plug-in for Toast to enable authoring high-def movies to Blu-ray or DVD.

You should now be starting to understand this story's headline. While the asking price may seem high, there's a lot of bang for your buck. But for anyone with a high-def camcorder, the ability to get your own footage onto Blu-ray is an exciting prospect indeed, especially as Apple has what seems to be a total indifference to supporting Blu-ray. You will, of course, need an external Blu-ray recorder to take advantage of the plug-in.

Toast covers practically any disc burning need you may have. Make audio CDs in a range of formats, create DVDs ready for DVD players, or compile data DVDs and encode them in a choice of formats for cross-platform compatibility. What's more, you can specify the number of copies you make of a given disc, which makes the task of making multiple back-up discs much easier than using Apple's burning solution, which only sets up for burning one disc at a time. I know a couple of photographers with stringent back-up routines who use Toast for this feature alone.

Using Toast's media browser, it's a snap to locate files from iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie or browse your hard drive for files. A simple drag-and-drop routine organises your files ready for burning.

The DVD authoring tool - in which you gather a selection of video files, queue them up, define a menu layout and press burn - is basic by comparison to iDVD but sometimes a quick'n'dirty solution is all you need. Toast can also archive AVCHD files direct from a camcorder, and will span the video files across multiple discs. These discs will be recognised by Toast or iMovie as a video source. This provides a convenient way to back-up AVCHD movies you don't yet want to edit and don't want to store on your hard drive.

Other Toast projects include copying discs (but not CSS-encrypted DVDs), photo discs, VCDs and video file conversions to get content onto other devices, such as an iPhone, Blackberry, Palm Treo or Sony PSP, even an Xbox 360.

All of Toast's burning capabilities were put to the test and the software worked flawlessly. You can't get an easier-to-use and more capable disc authoring solution than this one, although you will find many of Toast's individual capabilities in other software.

For instance, Elgato's turbo.264 HD performs video conversions, so the tip is you should plan your software purchasing carefully. If Toast's authoring capabilities are a must-have in your Applications folder, buying video conversion software may be unnecessary or an indulgence.

If Toast's comprehensive disc authoring capabilities aren't enough, the bundled software makes for a package that will address an amazing range of tasks. It's beyond the scope of this review to address all of the additional software's capabilities but here's a taste of what you get: CD Spin Doctor will turn audio sourced from vinyl LP or cassette tape into iTunes-friendly files; Soundsoap will clean noise from audio files and it's particularly good at removing pops and hiss; LightZone is an innovative image editor; and Mac2TiVo enables sharing videos with a TiVo device.

In use, Toast 10 proved itself stable and problem-free, once a 410MB update had been applied. Among the additional software in the Toast package I could find fault only with CD Spin Doctor, which output filtered audio files that Quicktime wouldn't recognise.

If all you need is Toast's basic burning functionality, there's a non-Pro offering at $179.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. An already well-respected disc authoring application now has more features and a software bundle that supports managing and sharing a range of file types. If you love working with digital audio and video, this is a title that should be in your software library. It's hard to imagine how Roxio could make this package any better.

Nikon Coolpix P90	
Type	Digital still camera
Rating	♦♦♦♦½
Pros	24x optical zoom; arguably the best camera instruction manual around.
Cons	SD video capture only
RRP	$799
Manufacturer	Nikon
Distributor	Nikon Australia
Reviewer	Barrie Smith
Hot links	www.nikon.com.au

Mega-zoom

Quite a while ago, Nikon sold a line of impressive compact digicams, with top specs and great optics and features, but these models have been overrun by the current flood of dSLRS.

Now it seems Nikon is back on top of the game again with the P90, a camera that not only makes you smile but capture them as well, then catches people only with their eyes open using a clever blink shutter.

Now, there's one less happy snap evil you will have to contend with.

At first glance you'd think it was a dSLR but it's far smaller and lighter (500gm). Then the penny drops and you look at the lens: a 24x Nikkor zoom, no less.

The zoom begins at a 35mm SLR equivalent of 26mm and extends to a full telephoto setting of 624mm. In real terms, no dSLR lens can match it, nor could you or I afford such an optic, even if it did exist.

Such a lens makes for an excellent all-round shooter. If you were holidaying in Sydney, it would be wide enough to capture the Sydney Opera House from a close range. Later in the day you could use the medium range zoom to pick out details on buildings in The Rocks area. If you then head to Taronga Zoo, you could zoom all the way out to get close-ups of animals' heads from a safe distance. You could even catch exciting action photos of locals enjoying water sports in Sydney Harbour. How's that for versatile?

The CCD captures 12.1-megapixels and records a maximum image size of 4000 x 3000 pixels.

Features. One of the major attractions to this camera is the 7.6cm vari-angle LCD screen that rolls through a vertical arc of 135 degrees but unfortunately does not swivel laterally, more's the pity for photographers desperate to explore unusual angles.

Then you find the turret finder is also an LCD - not an optical one. This can be a little disconcerting to use at first because the image doesn't seem to be displayed in real time, but it's nothing that you can't get used to. I expect many users won't even notice anything odd.

External controls are relatively few, while the viewfinder menu confirms image size, ISO speed etc. The mode dial offers options of auto, Program AE, shutter or aperture priority plus manual. Scene mode has 14 options plus panorama assist and voice recording.

There are two custom positions that can store personal settings such as ISO rating, white balance, metering mode etc. Very useful.

The P90's vibration reduction relies on an optical scheme, built into the lens itself. This works on stills shooting but an electronic and less desirable method is used to stabilise movie shooting.

Movies? The bad news is that the P90 only captures 640 x 480 pixel SD quality. This at a time when a camera at this price screams for high-def video.

At least the ISO range can run up to 6400, but here again we discover that ISO 3200 and 6400 sensitivity can only be used with a smaller image size: 2048x1536 pixels or less. At higher ISO levels you may also have to use the P90's noise reduction feature - supported at shutter speeds of a second or less.

Lens. The lens is well-corrected with only a little barrel distortion at the wide end of the zoom and no sign of any problems at the tele end. I was surprised to find a clever menu fix that can remove this problem in-camera: setting the camera to correct distortion gives you a final shot with the barrel distortion removed. I guess this was a cheaper solution than redesigning the lens.

Continuous shooting of full size images can be made at a speed of 1.4fps but if you're happy with a smaller image size you can tap into Sports Continuous mode and bang off 45 1920 x 1080 pixel shots at 15fps in the 16:9 aspect ratio. This should enable short and impressive high-def movie clips of sports action.

Added to this is the useful image cache that continuously stores the 10 frames immediately prior to firing the shutter, so you should never miss the peak of the action. A clever trick ,that one.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. One of the top compacts on the market, the P90 is so close to a dSLR it's not funny. It brings a near-dSLR experience without the penalties of weight and size. Quality compacts at this level have a definite place.

To make some test shots I spent time on Sydney's Observatory Hill, overlooking the Western face of the Bridge, Milson's Point and Luna Park. The master shot was made at full wide with the full tele shot aimed at Luna Park, some 600 metres away.

The quality of the wide shot was outstanding while the tele image was of similar quality but marred by atmospheric haze, a factor in long lens photography. This is a high quality compact digicam with a blast of a zoom.

Olympus mju Tough 8000
Digital still camera
♦♦♦♦
Easy to use; fabulous underwater ability.
CCD smear in video; limited 10 seconds video length.
$599
Olympus
Olympus Australia
Barrie Smith
www.olympus.com.au

Plunge cool

I've reviewed underwater cameras before, usually in a pool or splashing around in rock pools but this baby called for a more challenging environment. Sadly, I'm not a scuba diver but I do like a weekend of body surfing while my teenage son boogie-boards and I had never captured any pictures of us in the waves.

Olympus has done well with its Tough cameras, so well that Canon has launched a similar model. The Tough 8000's specs are perfect, not only for shooting in water but in almost any location you would not normally take a camera.

Tough. Tough the 8000 is: it can withstand water pressure down to 10m; an alarm alerts its owner diver at 7m; it's shockproof if dropped from heights approaching 2m; it's dustproof to keep sand and dirt out; it will withstand a pressure of 100 kg; and it's snowproof down to -10C.

You view with the help of a large LCD screen. There is no optical finder. A water-repellent, anti-reflection coating helps finder clarity and suits dry and underwater use.

An underwater detection sensor automatically knows when the 8000 is immersed underwater. LCD brightness is automatically optimised for underwater conditions and the display has underwater scene modes.

What caught my eye was the movie feature: now I could shoot not only amazing stills but video clips as well.

The camera takes 12.0-megapixel images and has a maximum image size of 3968x2976 pixels.

While only able to shoot SD quality movies at 640x480 pixel resolution, with 4:3 aspect ratio and at 30 fps, it does take video to new depths (excuse the pun). And the question is: when was the last time you shot video in or under the water?

The optical zoom range is only a modest 3.6x but, quite frankly, a longer zoom would be fairly useless, especially for underwater work. The underwater shooting rule, for stills and video, set the zoom to wide and stay as close to your target to minimise water turbidity that can make a picture murky.

The camera has altitude, atmospheric pressure and water depth display functions, delivered by an internal manometer.

The scene modes include Underwater Snapshot, Underwater Wide 1, Underwater Wide 2 and Underwater Macro and assume priority over other scene modes.

I'm not sure how desperately you would need it in water but there is a shockproof-compatible Dual CCD-shift image stabilisation mechanism, based on a floating CCD. That is, it floats internally!

And don't miss playing with Tap Control. You can operate the camera's main functions by tapping the top or sides of the camera body - or even the surface of the LCD monitor - perfect for when you're in the field wearing gloves or otherwise find yourself operating single-handedly. Then, when the day is over and you're relaxing at home replaying your effort, you can run a slide show just by tilting the camera.

And there's more: you can shoot an in-camera three-section panorama; Face Detect will also discover up to 16 faces.

I was ready to shoot three seconds after power up. After this, the Tough 8000 captured shots at 1-2 second intervals.

Quality. Colour was excellent as was sharpness. The only problems I noticed were CCD smear when the sun came into shot, possibly due to the anti-reflection coating causing Newton's Rings effects.

A warning: don't use the underwater setting if you are only in the water, not under it. This setting swung the colour balance to excessive magenta, presumably to counter underwater greeny blue hues.

You're going to find yourself in some pretty wild situations, so sun flare may be a problem as the lens is fairly exposed.

My dry land shots were most impressive, pointing to the camera's ability to shoot in dry as well as wet locations.

One major hangup in video is that each clip can run to only 10 seconds, so if you're working in the drink you can easily waste up to five precious seconds just setting up the shot.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. I absolutely loved the stills and video shot with the camera. However, it was really a matter of content over quality, with the camera frequently at the water line and frequently pointing up at the sun. Having said this, the Tough 8000 is a compact digital camera I would buy in a heartbeat. It does what it promises and then some.

It has pretty classy looks and is available in silver or black. Some will feel it doesn't look tough enough. Should khaki be an option?

Sony HDR-XR520VE	
Type	HD camcorder
Rating	★★★★½
Pros	Huge recording capacity, GPS, starts recording quickly
Cons	Heavy, hard drive needs to be backed up
RRP	$2699
Manufacturer	Sony
Distributor	Sony Australia
Reviewer	Danny Gorog
Hot links	www.sony.com.au

Sony hits the mark

Sony might be struggling in many of its business ventures, but judging by the release of its new line-up of handycams, video cameras isn't one of them. Building on the traditions of the past couple of years, a few themes are evident before we get into specifics of the new lineup.

First, DV tape-based cameras are on their way out. In fact, in the Sony 2009 line-up, there are only two left – a basic model that still shoots SD video, and a high-end model that captures HD video. Next year, two might become zero.

The second theme to note is cameras that use the newer AVCHD codec are here to stay, even though the newer format is arguably inferior to that of HDV, and editing AVCHD video requires up to four times the processing power.

However, tapeless camcorders have many advantages. They have less moving parts, begin recording quickly, and scenes are neatly divided so you can easily delete the bad ones.

You download content to your computer via USB which means all of the latest Macs are supported, even the new MacBooks without Firewire. And on the flagship HDR-XR520VE with a 240GB hard drive you can record for up to 96 hours in Full HD – that's the equivalent of 96 tapes worth of footage.

Even on the HDR-XR100 ($1499), Sony's cheapest hard drive HD handycam, you'll be able to capture up to 32 hours of footage.

But, as expected, it's the higher end handycams that inherit all the best new technology including better Exmor R CMOS sensors and Optical Active SteadyShot, which result in better quality video. Sony has also integrated a GPS sensor that automatically tags your video with the location you shot it – a feature that iMovie '09 can take advantage of.

I spent the week reviewing both the high-end HDR-XR520VE and the smaller HDR-XR200 and was sufficiently impressed by both that I'll probably dispose of my 12-month-old HDR-HC7 once all my DV movies have been digitised.

If you're used to tape-based handycams the first thing you'll notice about flash memory HD cameras is how quickly they start recording. This feature is underrated, and pretty important if you're trying to capture something as important as your kid's first steps.

In my tests, the Active SteadyShot feature also came in handy, and pairs nicely with the newly released stabilisation feature in iMovie '09. Sony reckons that Optical Active SteadyShot includes a 10x wider camera shake correction angle than conventional Optical SteadyShot technology. Using both features, some truly shaky video that would have been deleted made the cut.

Like many other digital cameras I've tested recently, I found the low-light performance on the XR520VE to have improved considerably from previous models. These improvements, according to Sony, are a result of the Exmor R CMOS sensor, which uses a new, back-illuminated technology that nearly doubles the sensitivity of the CMOS sensor when compared to other camcorders. The new sensor also means still image capture and smooth slow recording are also enhanced.

If you do opt for one of the larger hard drive handycams you'll also certainly remember you're carrying them. They're not light or small; the XR520VE weighs in at half a kilo. Still you could almost leave your still camera thanks to the inclusion of the 12.1-megapixel camera. Sure, the optics aren't as good as a Canon SLR but the included face detection and smile shutter technology mean your photos will still look pretty good. It worked for me every time.

For a couple of years now Sony has included in its handycam controls a touchscreen overlay on the flip-out viewfinder.

This has both good and bad points. I like that the controls are directly in front of you while you're watching or recording footage. But over time you'll find the screen fills up with dirty fingerprints that can obscure the view of the picture.

And another gripe, the user interface that controls the camera and settings, while logically laid out, are particularly unsightly and jarring when compared to other aspects of the handycam design. It's easy to tell both the UI and industrial design teams don't share an office.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Any gripes about user interface, weight and price melt away when you begin playback of video. Buyers should be thoroughly pleased with the vivid, high-def picture that this new Sony handycam delivers. A quality camcorder.

Panasonic SDR-S26
SD camcorder
3½
Easy to use, lightweight, cheap
Compression a bit harsh
$549
Panasonic
Panasonic Australia
Chris Oaten
www.panasonic.com.au

Vids in a flash

While the rush towards a high-def world continues apace, there is still plenty of room in the market for a standard-definition camcorder such as this one from Panasonic.

This handy camcorder is a bare-bones device compared to the sort of richly featured, high-def camcorders at the other end of the consumer market but it does everything a shooter after this format could want.

With a 70x optical zoom, optical image stabilisation, recording to SD card, auto and manual shooting options, face detection and various scene modes, it's got all the basics covered.

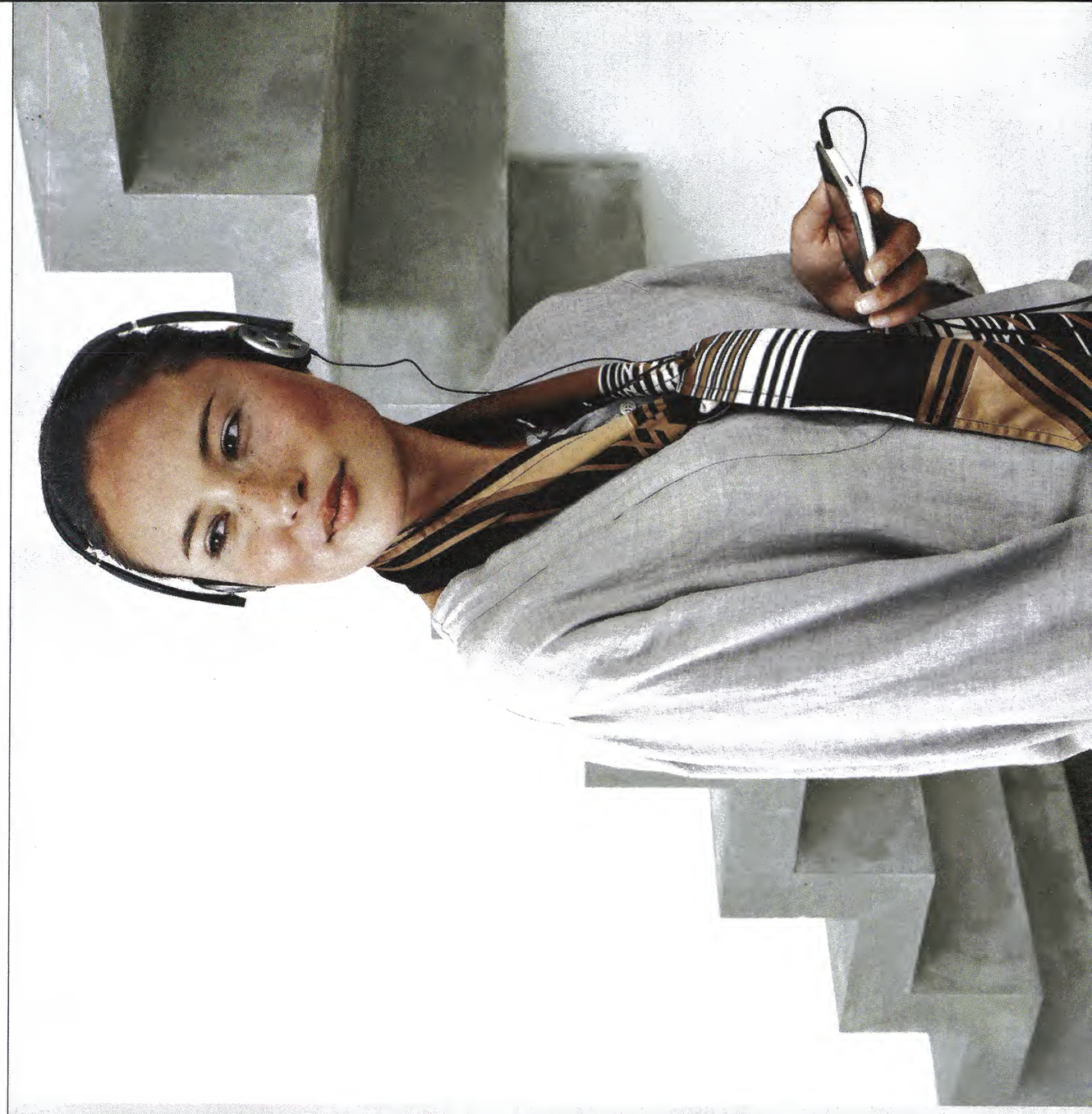
Delve a little deeper and you find some handy extras to help the shooter out. For instance, backlight compensation and a "soft skin" mode help with difficult lighting conditions and if it's a YouTube-compatible flick you want to create in a hurry, there's a web mode, which creates a YouTube-ready clip limited to 10 minutes.

I was shooting with it instantly, finding it easy to come to grips with the menu and controls. It's comfortable in the hand with controls in obvious places and feels very much like a Pannie always has. The company has a history of making products of this type and this experience shows.

How did it work with a Mac? No problem. As soon as it was plugged in via USB (the only option outside of slipping the SD card into a reader) iMovie kicked in to start importing and editing.

As far as picture quality goes, the SDR-S26 is adequate, with its MPEG-2 output looking a bit too heavily compressed. Battery performance is disappointing, too. That the battery charges in the camera and is replaceable is good but with less than an hour's recording time, you may need a spare battery handy.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. On a budget? Want an easy to operate camcorder for shooting web vids? Not too fussy about picture quality? This one's worth a look.



⌘-J

Epson Stylus Pro 4880
Type: A2 (17in) inkjet printer
Rating: ♦♦♦♦
Pros: stunning prints
Cons: occasionally fidgety to use
RRP: $3295
Manufacturer: Epson
Distributor: Epson Australia
Reviewer: Chris Oaten
Hot links: www.epson.com.au

Inking out loud

In the May edition of Australian Macworld our lab test compared budget photo printers. This printer is at the very opposite end of the quality spectrum, offering superb colour prints you could sell.

This printer would be right at home churning out A3 or A2 photos for professional users such as photographers, graphic artists or print bureaus. Our benchmark test image showed this printer could deliver accurate colour rendition of all manner of subjects - from skin tones through to brilliant yellows, deep reds and the often poorly-handled metallic tones.

The only fault we could pick up in the initial lab test print was the slightest presence of banding in a graduated greyscale swatch but our concerns were soon allayed; we kept an eye on subsequent prints but couldn't find any noticeable banding. There was also the opinion, at a subjective level, that the printer's magentas were oversaturated; an interesting response because the 4880 features a vivid magenta ink designed to enhance this hue.

I ran several professional quality photographic images through the 4880 and they were simply stunning. Mono prints, in true black and white, were especially impressive, as was the printer's built-in toning options. The sepia effect was the most darkroom-like I've yet seen.

The 4880's use of three black inks – black, light black and light light black – provides excellent reproduction of mid-tones, allowing for the rendering of subtle details that I have seen other printers in this class struggle with. There are eight colour tanks - the three blacks already listed, plus cyan, light cyan, vivid magenta, light vivid magenta, and yellow. There is also an optional matte black tank.

There can be no doubt about the quality of the prints from the 4880. And with Epson claiming its pigment-based Durabrite K3 inks will last for up to 300 years (in dark storage) or, in more realistic terms, up to 75 years under glass for colour prints and up to 200 years under glass for mono prints - there's a reasonable assurance of print longevity.

This printer can be a bit of a pain to set up, though. But before I explain that, let me say this: the 4880, being designed for professional use, does not suffer fools lightly. For instance, if the print finish doesn't seem right, there may be paper handling adjustments that need to be made.

But there are no hand-holding wizards here to walk you through the steps needed to fix the issue. You need to know what you're doing.

Even accounting for the exacting tolerances of such a machine, and that its user needs to be well acquainted with its controls and printer software, there is one set-up issue I take, er, issue with.

When you run the printer software installer, you need to be aware two drivers are bundled in the installer. One is for the 4880 and the other for a 4880c. You need to specify that you want to use the 4880 driver. I didn't, at least not the first time around, so as a consequence had a lot of trouble changing paper source settings.

It wasn't until I reinstalled the printer software and selected the 4880 driver in the Print set-up in System Preferences that the full range of paper source settings (tray, manual-feed and roll) were available to use.

Something to bear in mind is that the machine, at 39.5kg, is large and heavy, so you will want to designate a permanent home for it. Also, prints from roll paper tend to curl and caterpillar off the end of the output tray, even with the tray fully extended. A flat surface beyond the edge of the output tray is required to prevent paper finding the floor. Cut sheets are not a problem.

The 4880 was supplied with a roll of Epson Glossy Paper (250) and high volume 220ml ink tanks ($217.80, standard tanks are 110ml, $133.10). I printed the equivalent of 63 A2 sheets and the ink monitor indicated the tanks were about half empty. The roll feed provides a very efficient way of printing and clearly would be the method of choice for high volume print runs. We ran it over three sessions of five hours each without failure.

One last note. We found street prices are way below the recommended retail for the printer and ink tanks. It would pay to shop around.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Excellent print quality with durable inks at up to 2880x1440dpi resolution on superb paper at sizes up to borderless A2. What's not to like? If you have a need for a printer with this capability, the Epson Pro 4880 should be at the top of your shopping list. We're still admiring the prints that came from this superb machine.

There's more to this story in the online version.
Check it out at www.macworld.com.au/reviews

Elgato turbo.264 HD	
hardware video encoder	
¥¥¥¥¥	
fast video encoding	
price	
$379	
Elgato	
Simms and Conexus	
Chris Oaten	
www.elgato.com	

Speed demon encoder

There are two methods for encoding video. One is using software, the other is with a hardware encoder. If you encode video on a regular basis and need the fastest times possible you should have a hardware encoder, such as Elgato's successor to its turbo.264, which carries a HD designation signifying a new model with expanded capabilities.

The proof of this encoder's muscle is easy to demonstrate. First, I found a 3:47 standard-def movie and dropped it twice into the 264 HD's job window.

I then specified two different output files - one for an iPhone and one for Apple TV. Both files were encoded in a shade under five minutes.

On the other hand, when using Quicktime's export presets to test a software transcoding solution, the result was almost seven minutes – and this was for just one export, the iPhone-ready version of the video.

Next, I used a 1:56, 3GB high-def video (1080p) I'd exported from Final Cut Pro and transcoded it to the Sony PSP format. Using the 264 HD, it took 3:22. Using Apple's Compressor software (part of the pro Final Cut Studio package), a similar video conversion took 7:42 – more than twice as long. An iPhone export of the same video file was shrunk from its original 3GB to just 19MB, which played beautifully on my iPhone.

There can be no doubting the 264 HD's speed advantage, yet encoding speed is only half the story here.

The 264 HD installs a Quicktime component, meaning any application (such as iMovie) that leverages Quicktime can exploit the 264 HD hardware accelerator to speed exports.

It's also versatile. You can drag and drop just about any video file into the application to convert it to a high-quality H.264 file in standard or HD resolutions. Supported formats are AVCHD Video, QuickTime, AVI, DV, WMV, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 Program/Transport Stream, MPEG-4, MP4, M4V, H.263, H.264 AVC, Xvid, VIDEO_TS and, according to Elgato, other file types that are likely so obscure that they don't bear mentioning.

For owners of camcorders that use the AVCHD format, the 264 HD will automatically detect the camera and enable editing features plus automation of uploads to YouTube. I didn't test this, however, as I don't have my own AVCHD camera but *AMW* contributor Danny Gorog, who also tried this device (and waxed lyrical about it) told me it works like a charm.

Another handy trick is being able to re-name files, with names applied as DVD chapter titles if you batch export clips. This is a handy feature indeed.

Yet another is being able to customise your export formats, so you can create as many output presets as you like in addition to the nine that come pre-configured with the software.

I found this especially useful for transcoding vids already encoded for iPhone into a format that can be played on a Canon M80 portable media viewer, which requires some obscure MPEG-4 settings.

For my money, however, the turbo 264 HD's natural companion is Elgato's Eye TV, which shouldn't be too surprising considering the two devices come from the same company.

If you record HD broadcast content from free-to-air stations, being able to accelerate exports will make the process of recording/exporting/syncing and watching TV shows a great deal more enjoyable through having to wait less time to see the files arrive on your Apple TV.

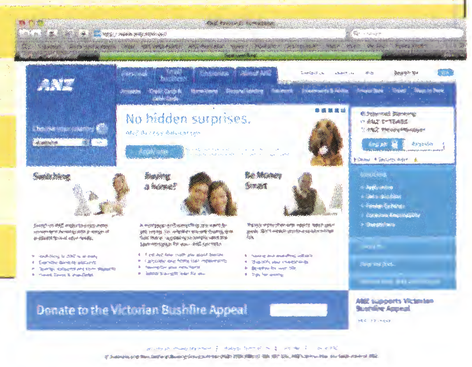
On top of all this, with the 264 HD carrying the video conversion load, you'll not find yourself fighting for processor cycles while using CPU-intensive applications. I ran through a set of image enhancements to RAW image files that were roundtrip-edited between Aperture and Photoshop CS3 while in the background the 264 HD batched 76 1080p clips into 720p files. No problems.

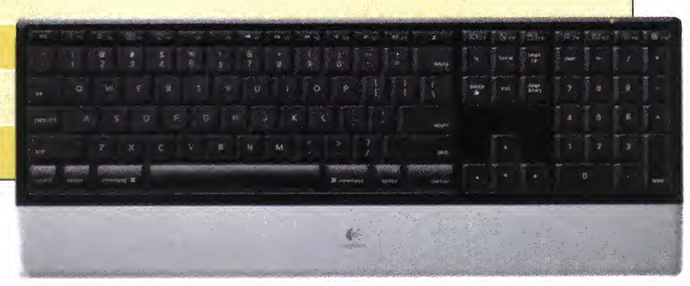
One tip you might overlook. If you have a lot of clips queued for transcoding, don't go through each one individually to set the output format. Choose your format for the first clip in the queue while holding down the option key to apply the same export format to all clips.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Elgato's turbo.264 HD does exactly what its maker claims it will do, has clearly been designed for the Mac, is a cinch to use, and takes a great deal of processing load off your Mac's CPU. For Eye TV owners especially it's a recommended buy, but for anyone who loves to share video by exporting it to one device or many will find this hardware encoder a godsend. It's just a shame the price could marginalise many users who would deeply appreciate the speed boost, especially those using older Macs that struggle with software-based encoding.

⌘-J

	Norton Internet Security for Mac Dual Protection	Logitech diNovo Mac edition
Type	Security software	Wireless keyboard
Rating	3½	3½
Pros	Minimal performance impact, Windows and Mac protection	Stylish design, build quality
Cons	Disk scanning slow, no Firefox support.	No USB ports, pricey
RRP	$129	$199.95
Manufacturer	Symantec	Logitech
Distributor	Symantec/1800 680 026	Synnex Australia
Reviewer	Anthony Caruana	Chris Oaten
Hot links	www.symantec.com	www.logitech.com.au





Better safe than sorry

Mac users have lived in a cocoon for a long time, sheltered from viruses, trojans and other nasties. Then, in January, pirated versions of Adobe CS4 and Apple iWork '09 infected with the iServices trojan appeared. This type of incident means Mac users are no longer as safe as they once were.

Norton Internet Security for Mac Dual Protection is two applications in one. For your money you get both Norton Internet Security for Mac and Norton Internet Security 2009 for Windows. If you don't run any Windows applications you can get the Mac-only version for $30 less.

There are three components to Norton Internet Security for Mac: Norton AntiVirus, Norton Confidential and Norton Firewall. We found installation to be simple and completed without a hitch.

The antivirus software ran in the background and used very little memory or processor and didn't cause our system to slow down. By default, every disk or image that is mounted by OS X is scanned. Although Mac users may not be vulnerable to viruses, or at least not for now, passing an infected disk or memory stick to a Windows user is possible so checking that anything you connect to your machine is safe is worth doing. Our test DVD, with about 1800 images took several minutes to scan.

The final component of the Norton triumvirate was Norton Confidential. This scanned every web page we visited, telling us through a thin information bar under the Safari toolbar, if the site contained any malware or if it was fraudulent. This didn't interfere with our normal browsing but wasn't supported in Firefox.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Every Mac user should take appropriate precautions in securing their system. Norton Internet Security for Mac Dual Protection provides the level of protection Mac users require, without a noticeable hit on system performance, at a reasonable price.

Style is the key

Lithe. Stylish. Sexy. The first three words that sprung to mind when I first unpacked this sleek unit from Logitech. The second thing to spring to mind was how is this keyboard very different from what Apple is offering?

There's the colour. A piano black casing, black keys, with a gunmetal palmrest. It does pair nicely with a MacBook and if you have one of the newer iMacs, it's a perfect match. Here's the keyboard you would choose if you wanted the executive touch in your office.

It's wireless, but it has a numeric keypad. This significantly differentiates it from the Apple wireless keyboard. Only the wired version of Apple's keyboard has the numeric keypad, so if you must go wireless and must be able to punch numbers, this is a compelling option over the Apple kit.

Otherwise, in use it's not a lot different from the Apple keyboard. In tactile terms, the more closely set keys with bevelled edges lend a different feel to typing and have a little more resistance under the fingertips. Futhermore, the dedicated function keys for Cover Flow view, Exposé, Spaces, Mail, iTunes and Calculator are a nice touch but only relevant to keen users of those features.

It's not a Bluetooth keyboard, requiring a USB dongle to communicate with your Mac. This means you lose one USB port to the dongle and the two USB ports that would be on the Apple keyboard. That's something to consider if you switch USB peripherals frequently.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. This is one for the user whose cosmetic considerations are more pressing than functional ones. It looks great, is a pleasure to type on, and complements Mac hardware, but power users will want more features while bemoaning the loss of USB ports. Cost-conscious buyers won't find much to convince them they should forego the wired keyboard that comes with a new iMac.

Targus File Share Cable
Networking device
4½
Elegant solution to vexing problem
Can be fiddly on the Windows side
$79
Targus
Targus
Chris Oaten
www.targus.com.au

Networking made simple

When I first tried this device some weeks ago, I had a lot of trouble getting Windows XP to work as it was supposed to. Then again, that shouldn't be too surprising, right? My more recent attempt at using this seemingly magical device went off without a hitch.

The first time around, Windows XP, which I was running under Boot Camp on my iMac, would recognise that file transfers were in progress but once the transfer was complete, the file didn't show up in the transfer software that comes with the cable. Odd, huh?

The next time I tried it, to prepare this review, the problem simply didn't present itself.

Here's how the File Share Cable works. Connect one end to a Mac, the other to a Windows PC (or a Mac) via USB. No extra software is needed, with circuitry built into the cable handling the networking procedures.

Once connected, software that runs off the device provides a pair of windows on each computer - one representing the local drive, the other the networked drive (which would be the other computer).

From there, it's a simple matter of drag and drop to transfer files, though read/write permission restrictions can get in the way, requiring permission adjustments or simply a different copy location. This occurred when transferring files using a standard account.

Power users with intimate knowledge of networking might turn their nose up at such a solution but for the rest of us, there is no easier way to connect, set up and transfer files between two computers.

If *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author Douglas Adams had used this device, I'm sure he would have called it the Babel Fish cable.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're not gifted in the art of networking and need to migrate large volumes of data, this device is a godsend.

Verbatim Tuneboard
Keyboard
3½
Old school keys
No USB ports
$75
Verbatim
Verbattim
Chris Oaten
www.verbatim.com.au

Clacker with charm

If, like me, you learned to type on a manual Remington typewriter, this keyboard from Verbatim will make your fingertips feel right at home with its big, clacky keys and bulky design that wouldn't look out of place before a Commodore 64.

This is old school design, people. If you like the modern Apple (or similar) keyboards with their svelte styling and low profile, high-sensitivity keys, you'll undoubtedly give this one a wide berth. That said, the Tuneboard is a full keyboard, with numeric pad. For a lot of users, this counts for a lot.

Styling aside, the Tuneboard has two features that set it apart. One is a set of speakers, with their own volume controls, mounted above the keys. The sound is not great - though with some bass response they are certainly an improvement on a laptop's or iMac's tinny speakers - but for anyone with a small desk it's a winning idea.

There is also blue backlighting, which can be switched on and off with a button next to the speakers' mute button. This amounts to little more than eye candy, however, because the backlighting doesn't shine through the keys (as it does on a MacBook Pro) but around them. It's good if you're after the Darth Vader look.

On the down side, the keyboard has no USB inputs, though it does have microphone and headphone jacks. If you're using a MacBook you'll know that you can't have enough USB ports, so this keyboard's lack of them is disappointing.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're among those disappointed with the paucity in the market of bulky keyboards with clacky keys, this one is for you. The speakers are a bonus, but should form the sole reason for buying it only if you are really tight for desk space. I warmed to this keyboard right away but swap it for my regular Apple keyboard only when a long session of writing is on the cards.

Dave Bullard
thinks Apple products are music to his ears

More boom in your room

The built-in speakers on any Mac are pretty good these days when compared to the shockers we used to have to deal with. But they're still small and tiring to listen to over any length of time - or even for short periods, if we're talking about the laptop variety.

The best way to get better sound is to hook up a decent set of external speakers (such as those in this month's feature) but this can be expensive and impractical if you're on the road. Headphones are another option but you don't always want to have your head encased or your ears plugged.

But there is another solution: Using software sound enhancers to tweak the audio. These work by either boosting those sounds only heard in the left or right channels and suppressing those heard in both channels, or phase-inverting certain frequencies and feeding them to the opposite stereo channel, or even just boosting or reducing certain frequencies of sound.

If you're using iTunes - and we'll assume that most Mac users do, as it's a brilliant piece of software - your first port of call should be the Equaliser, which you'll find in the program's Window menu.

While you can adjust the sliders manually, it has many presets for specific genres of music, such as Classical, Jazz, Hip-Hop and Rock. One of the most useful for MacBook users is Small Speakers, which simply boosts the bass and reduces the treble for a more rounded sound.

Another tweak already in your hands is the iTunes Sound Enhancer, which you can access by going to iTunes Preferences, then clicking on the Playback tab. This expands the sound field somewhat, but is fairly crude and, to my ears, doesn't achieve much.

It's on by default in later versions of iTunes, and turning it off may improve your sound.

Moving time and space. SRS Labs is a name you've probably heard of in connection with virtual surround sound as featured in products from Pioneer, Sony, LG, Samsung... in fact, from almost all of the major brands.

The company also makes a very cool piece of software called iWOW Premium for iTunes. This is a sophisticated tool that uses a raft of technologies to not only widen the sound field but give it more depth and height as well. SRS claims it restores audio clues buried in the source material to make your music sound more natural and detailed.

iWOW Premium for iTunes (Mac and PC) works extremely well and is available for about $50 as a direct download from www.srslabs.com.

SRS also makes a very cool iWOW adaptor for iPod - a unit which plugs into the dock port of an iPod and gives the same effect as the iTunes software - but this is unfortunately only available to customers in the US at the moment.

It's astounding; time is fleeting... Another sound enhancer worth looking at is AstoundStereo Expander (now in version 2.0) from GenAudio. It aims to "immerse listeners in a 360-degree, spherical soundscape that mimics the sound of real life". It does this to varying degrees of success depending on your speakers, but really doesn't do as good a job as iWOW Premium. However, you can try it for 30 days before denting your credit card. It's priced at about $50. The first version of the software was a Featured Download application on Apple.com and a Staff Pick, which helped make it a Top 10 download from the site.

Not sure if iLike. I've reviewed more than a dozen iPod FM transmitters, mainly because readers are always on the lookout for the best way to get their iPod tracks to play through their car speakers.

The latest to cross my desk is the iLuv i707BLK, one of the type that cradles your iPod and plugs into your car's accessory socket (what we used to call a cigarette lighter). It's the width of an iPod touch or classic and comes with two cradles to fit most iPods with dock connectors.

Its first shortcoming is discovered when plugging it in, as its plastic rod connector is impractical in many modern cars where the accessory socket is mounted low on the dash or between the seats - even when using the supplied extension rod. It also feels a bit flimsy. The flexible arm and socket on Belkin's TuneBase FM are far superior.

The iLuv also lacks a scanner that finds the "emptiest" radio frequency in your area and sets the transmitter, which is something that you'll get from Griffin, Belkin, Monster and others. Here you have to do it yourself, which means you really have to pull off the road to adjust the channels safely.

Sound-wise, the $119.95 i707BLK is not too bad, sitting at about average when compared to its peers.

Finder

PH: 1300 768 112
Web: www.soundtechnology.com.au
Page: 25

Email: info@culturedcode.com
Web: www.culturedcode.com
Page: 16

PH: 03 9896 1555
Email: sales@pentagon.net.au
Web: www.pentagon.net.au
Page: 37

PH: 1 800 817 1471
Email: info@circusponies.com
Web: www.circusponies.com
Page: 57

PH: 1800 334 684
Email: sales@designwyse.com.au
Web: www.designwyse.com.au
Pages: 4 & 5

PH: 02 9725 5354
Email: richardsolo@uccaustralia.com.au
Web: www.ucc-online.com.au
Page: 29

PH: 02 9975 0900
Email: info@conexus.com.au
Web: www.conexus.com.au
Page: 15

PH: 1800 028 316 (Aust)
0800 444 929 (NZ)
Web: www.filemaker.com.au
Page: 10

PH: 03 9818 2100
Email: salesteam@streetwise.com.au
Web: www.streetwise.com.au
Pages: 6 & 7

PH: 1300 136 557
Email: sales@folks.com.au
Web: www.creativefolks.com.au
Page: 79

PH: 02 9319 6877
Email: info@hifivideomarketing.com.au
Web: www.hifivideomarketing.com.au
Page: 39

PH: 1800 648 628 (AU) 64 9 263 9885 (NZ)
Email: sales@syntec.com.au
Web: www.syntec.com.au
Page: 69

compnow.com.au

South Melbourne 64 Clarendon St,
PH: 03 9684 3600
Malvern 1420 High Street,
PH: 03 9508 2600
Geelong Level 1 Westfield Shopping Centre,
PH: 03 5223 1550
South Yarra 409a Chapel St,
PH: 03 9827 5011
Chadstone Lower Level Chadstone Shopping Centre,
PH: 03 9568 8655
RMIT On-Campus Building 10, Level 4, Swanston Street
PH: 03 9654 8111
Doncaster Level 1 Westfield Shopping Centre
PH: 03 9684 3688
Monash On-Campus Building 10, Campus Centre, Clayton
PH: 03 9684 3655
UTS On-Campus Level 2, 235 Jones Street, Ultimo
PH: 02 9951 7940
Crows Nest 222 Pacific Hwy,
PH: 02 9951 7979
UNSW On-Campus Quadrangle Main Campus, Randwick
PH: 02 9385 2377
Email: sales@compnow.com.au
Web: www.compnow.com.au
Page: 80

PH: 03 9662 9666 (Melbourne)
02 8383 1600 (Sydney)
Web: www.mymac.com.au
Pages: 8 & 9

PH: 02 9906 5227
Email: info@tryandbyte.com.au
Web: www.tryandbyte.com.au
Page: 61

PH: 1300 361 119
Email: sales@nextbyte.com.au
Web: www.nextbyte.com.au
Page: 13

PH: 08 8381 5142
Email: sales@on2dvd.com.au
Web: www.on2dvd.com.au
Page: 43

PH: 815 338 8658
Email: sales@macsales.com
Web: www.macsales.com
Pages: 2 & 3

macmarket

apple help?

apple computer & ipod service centre

The Mac Doctors

Authorised Service Provider

459 Flinders St Townsville City Ph: (07) 4724 5889

449 Ipswich Rd Annerley Brisbane Ph: (07) 3848 9438

Quality Ex Demo Superseded Macs All with Warranty

macs as new

www.macsasnew.com.au

always updated with current stock

330D Miller Street
CAMMERAY
NSW 2062
ph: **(02) 9922 2327**

Apple Secondhand Reseller

Kensington®

Quailty peripherals for your notebook, desktop and iPod. Proudly distributed by Try and Byte.
To view the full range of products, please visit our website.

TRY&BYTE Unit 17, 2a Herbert St, St Leonards NSW 2065
Tel **(02) 9906 5227** • Fax (02) 9906 5605

www.tryandbyte.com.au

Mac+Aid
SERVICE • SOLUTIONS • SUPPORT

On-Site Mac Service
We come to you, anywhere in Melbourne Metro area

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
- Apple Mac Troubleshooting
- Installation & Maintenance
- Networking, Internet & Email
- Upgrades & Independant Advice

Phone: **1800 762 040**
Email: support@macaid.com.au
Visit: www.macaid.com.au

Adelaide's **Mac** experts

Exciting new store - 08 8260 1311

free quotes. | 8A Light Common Mawson Lakes. | free parking.

sales. service. support. upgrades. onsite repairs.

MAC SOLUTIONS

data recovery. new/ used showroom. ipod repairs/sales

www.macsolutions.com.au | sales@macsolutions.com.au

Own Shares?

Then you'll love . . .

Australian ShareManager Mac/PC

Portfolio Management Software

• Easy to Use • Suits Home or Professionals • Year End Reports • Capital Gains, Profit/Loss Calculations • Multiple Portfolios • PC Version Now Available!

Download a free demo at:
www.sharemanager.com.au
(03) 9391 8993

Version 4.22
Now Available

next byte®

Do you want to join the world's largest Apple reseller?

We have a variety of opportunities available so if you love Macs as much as we do send your resumé to
hr@nextbyte.com.au

macmarket

FREE SHIPPING $99.95

The NEW aGent V4 webcam is compatible with all your Macs with its complete range of attachment clips for iMac and Macbooks. This new generation edition is available for the low price of $99.95 with free shipping and features a sleek design in high quality German polished steel. The high definition aGent V4 webcam is the ultimate choice for all your visual media needs. Buy yours online at www.liquiddigital.com.au

AGENT V4 HD

www.liquiddigital.com.au

PENTAGON

Premium Reseller

PENTAGON DIGITAL

BRAND NEW WEBSITE!

HUGE Discounts & Deals Online
Lots of New Products
Australia-Wide Shipping

www.pentagon.net.au

03 9896 1555 sales@pentagon.net.au

Apple Computers

- Authorised Reseller
- Competitive prices
- Buy Australia-wide online
- Convenient store hours

Apple Service

- Apple authorised service
- Average 3.2 day turn-around
- Available on-site in Melbourne

iPod & iPhone repairs

- Free assessment for iPods
- $66 assessment fee for iPhones
- 6 month warranty on parts
- iPod repairer since 2005

Matte screens

MacBook and MacBook Pro matte screen replacements

- Removes the glare permanently
- MacBook retains Apple warranty
- Only $499 for exchange display

synergetic Australia Pty Ltd

315-319 High Street, Kew, Vic. 3101
Phone (03) 9855 2323
www.synergeticaustralia.com

WYSIWYG

DIGITAL COLOUR PRINTING

Fast Turnaround
Competitive Prices
We use HP Indigo 5000
Offset Quality Digital Printing

Call us for a quotation today!

Freecall 1300 wysiwyg

or go to our website

www.wysiwyg.com.au

Request An Estimate | Place A New Order | Send A File | View A Proof

WYSIWYG DIGITAL COLOUR PRINTING

Unit 26, 6 Herbert Street St Leonards NSW 2065
Tel 02 9922 7288 Fax 02 9922 2788
Email sales@wysiwyg.com.au
Ground Floor 272 Kent Street Sydney NSW 2000
Tel 02 9262 4888 Fax 02 9262 1960
Email bureau@wysiwyg.com.au

SECURITY CAM

Security Software & Hardware for Mac

YOUR HOME & BUSINESS
SECURITY SPECIALISTS
03 9895 2950

www.securitycam.com.au

Data Detect

MAC Hard Drive Data Recovery Specialists

Mac

- ✓ Australia's Premier Data Recovery Company
- ✓ Hard disk recovery (internal HDD and USB)
- ✓ Free diagnostic evaluation and quotation
- ✓ Your data back or NO CHARGE – GUARANTEED
- ✓ Nation wide free return postage
- ✓ Quickest turn around time
- ✓ Class 100 certified CLEAN environment
- ✓ Emergency services
- ✓ RAID recovery experts

www.datadetect.com.au
Tel: 02-9929-4822
24/7 hour Emergency service: 02-9460-3864
Email: info@datadetect.com.au

Brickbats and bouquets, when and where deserved.

One more thing...

Life's too short

So many things about living in Australia are great. We've got a great public health system, a government that pays us to put in a tax return, and in the not-too-distant future, we'll even have fibre network to the home. Our quality of life is even more apparent when you see some of the junk that airs on US TV, including the ads. The particular series of ads that caught my attention recently (thanks to the wonders of YouTube you can watch them in Australia) are from Microsoft.

For years, Microsoft has been battling Apple for the hearts and minds of the PC-buying public. I'm sure you've seen Apple's latest batch of commercials. They pit Justin Long (the Mac) against John Hodgeman (the PC) and cover nearly everything wrong with Windows. Things such as viruses, design, the requirements to have full time tech-support on hand, and the fact that while Macs come loaded with useful software such as iLife '09, most Windows boxes come full of bloatware that new owners spend hours getting rid of. If you've missed any of the ads they are all available to view at apple.com/getamac/ads/

But the latest series of ads from Microsoft hits Apple where it really hurts: on price.

The premise of the Microsoft ads goes something like this. A young, cool-looking guy or girl gets presented with a challenge. A Microsoft crony tells them to find a PC with a certain specification (such as a laptop with a 17in screen for under $1000). If they can find it, they'll get to keep it. All the ads mention Macs, but Lauren in the first ad says: "I'm just not cool enough to be a Mac person". Giampaolo in the second ad says: "Macs to me are more about aesthetics than they are about computing power". Inevitably, the actors end up settling on either an HP or Sony laptop with all the specs they want for under $1000.

Apple doesn't generally comment on anything, let alone a competitor's TV commercials, but Apple spokesman Bill Evans told Arik Hesseldahl, a reporter for *BusinessWeek*, that "a PC is no bargain when it doesn't do what you want. The one thing that both Apple and Microsoft can agree on is that everyone thinks the Mac is cool. With its great designs and advanced software, nothing matches it at any price". Microsoft declined to comment for the same article.

If you do happen to watch the ads, also watch the very funny parody called "Homeless Frank" (tinyurl.com/dk2v9a), it's much better.

But the thing that continues to get under my skin (and that's probably exactly how Microsoft planned it) is that Windows doesn't get a mention anywhere, in any of the ads. Nothing. It's like it doesn't exist. Surely, if Microsoft believed Windows was superior to OS X this would be the message. Instead, Microsoft has descended to the level that everyone else in the PC ecosystem understands. Price. Ironic, given the most expensive component for most PCs is the Windows licence.

Still, we're not denying that in simple dollar terms PCs are cheaper, but in most cases, on a like-for-like basis when you compare the same processor, memory, hard disk, screen size and build quality, Macs are near enough to the same price as a PC as they need to be. But unfortunately, this simple analysis doesn't take into account two critical factors that can have a huge influence on the price.

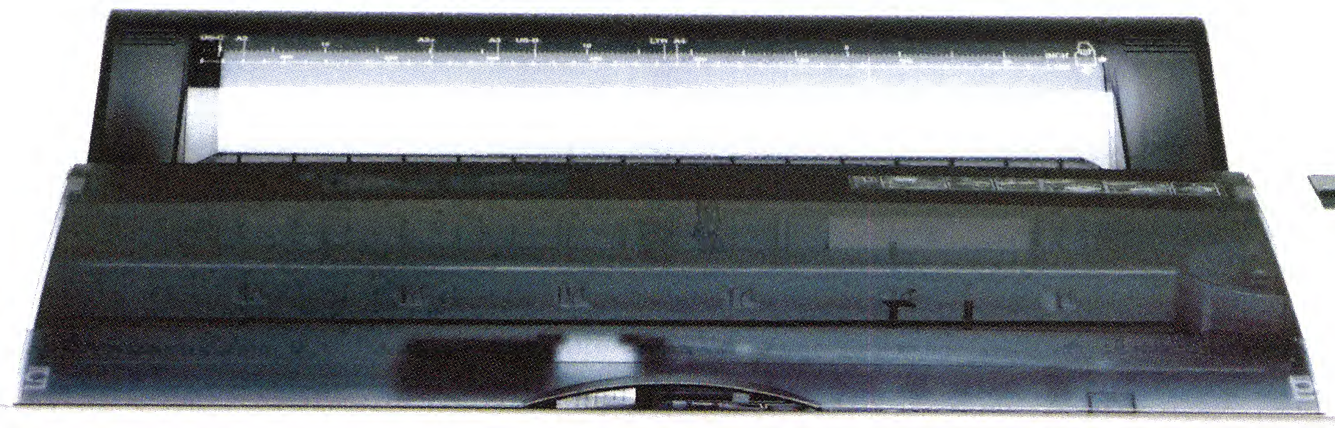
Firstly, Macs come loaded with software that most PC users need and end up paying extra for. Software such as iLife '09 for managing and editing videos, photos and pictures. Look around for equivalent software for a Windows machine and chances are if you can find something that is reasonable, it'll cost you dearly. Even the basics such as anti-virus and anti-spyware tools cost about $100. Add in a movie editing program like iMovie, a music editing application like Garageband, and the cost of owning a Windows PC grows substantially.

Second, and closer to my heart, is the resale value of a Mac. Based on my selling experience on eBay, you'll typically get at least 50 per cent of the initial purchase price of your Mac back when you go to sell it, assuming the Mac is less than three years old. If you sell it sooner, sometimes up to 65 per cent. Factor resale value into the equation and the Mac comes out trumps every time. Try doing the same with your three-year-old PC and you'll be lucky to recover little more than 30 per cent, if it still works.

log on to our webshop at
www.creativefolks.com.au
for our monthly specials
on all product lines

1300 136 557
www.creativefolks.com.au

All Epson 220ml inks for the Epson Stylus Pro large format printer range NOW $171.60



SUPER DEAL
$2595
Epson Stylus Pro 4880

Sleek, compact and stylish, the **Epson Stylus Pro 4880 17-inch (423mm)** printer delivers all the quality and benefits of the larger Epson Stylus Pro 7880 and 9880 printers. It's printer designed to be a perfect fit in virtually any production environment; and with the new Epson UltraChrome K3 Ink with Vivid Magenta, is able to generate prints with outstanding gamut cover.

creativefolks.com.au

comp now
compnow.com.au

Adobe GOLD Partner

Authorised Vodafone Dealer | vodafone

Premium Reseller

Did you know?

You may be eligible for **$750 Tax Back** or a **30% Tax Deduction*** when you purchase an Apple Mac, for school or business, from Computers Now.

Australian Government's Education Tax Refund?

- Get up to $375 for each primary school student when you claim up to $750*
- Get up to $750 for each secondary school student when you claim up to $1,500*

Australian Government's Investment Allowance for business.

Get an additional tax deduction of 30% of the cost of eligible new depreciating assets acquired until the end of June 2009*.

Refer to the ATO website or your accountant for further details.

Computers Now Apple On-Campus Reseller : For Apple student discounts via our On-campus stores!**

Chadstone	Shopping Centre	t: 03 9568 8655	**Sth Melbourne**	64 Clarendon Street	t: 03 9684 3600
Doncaster	Westfield Doncaster	t: 03 9684 3688	**South Yarra**	409a Chapel Street	t: 03 9827 5011
Geelong	Westfield Geelong	t: 03 5223 1550	**Crows Nest**	222 Pacific Highway	t: 02 9951 7979
Malvern	1420 High Street	t: 03 9508 2600	**UNSW****	Main Campus, Randwick	t: 02 9385 2377
Monash**	Campus Centre, Clayton	t: 03 9684 3655	**UTS**** NEW**	235 Jones Street, Ultimo	t: 02 9951 7940
RMIT**	Main Campus, Swanston St	t: 03 9654 8111			

All stores : sales@compnow.com.au

Need help with a purchase or just need some info?
email us on sales@compnow.com.au, or visit us on www.compnow.com.au

comp now
compnow.com.au

*The content of this advert does not constitute tax advice and is for general information only. As tax legislation is complex, you should obtain you own advice about the effects of this Act on your own circumstances before purchasing any product in question. For further detail, visit www.australia.gov.au/educationtaxrefund and http://tinyurl.com/c7y5qs. All prices include GST. Images for illustrative purposes only. Prices & specifications subject to change and stock availability. E&OE. www.compnow.com.au